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ABSTRACT

This book offers a step-by-step approach to marketing for educational institutions, especially colleges and universities. The book is organized into three broad sections. Section 1 makes the case for marketing in six chapters which address: (1) challenges which are or will affect colleges and universities; (2) the role of institutional mission, vision, and leadership in the marketing planning process; (3) the definition of marketing and the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion; (4) principles of qualitative and quantitative institutional research; (5) the importance of institutional image; and (6) development of a segmenting strategy. Section 2 is on the planning process itself; its three chapters cover empowering the marketing process and building the team; the seven steps of writing a marketing plan; and evaluation of the overall process. Section 3 offers guidelines to help troubleshoot and improve the effectiveness of the marketing plan and process. Five appendices list sources of secondary research, organizations and associations, and valuable Web sites; plus a primer for working with teams and a sample faculty survey form. (Contains approximately 270 references). (DB)

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Educational institutions face an unprecedented and sometimes bewildering array of challenges to their growth and prosperity. Founding missions seem increasingly ill-suited for the demands of today's marketplace. Budgets are excruciatingly tight while voices and programs clamor for financial support. A paralyzed decision-making process

Integrated Marketing for Colleges, Universities, and Schools

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By Robert A. Sevier

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Integrated Marketing for Colleges, Universities, and Schools

A Step-by-Step Planning Guide

By Robert A. Sevier
Vice President for Research and Marketing
Stamats Communications, Inc.

CASE
Council for Advancement and Support of Education

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Author's Note

I couldn't have written this book without the contributions of the countless colleagues and clients, who, over the years, became friends. And while it is dangerous to list people because the likelihood is high that I will overlook someone, there are simply some people who must be mentioned. First, Stewart Dyke, my first real boss and mentor. There is seldom a day that goes by that I don't remember something he taught me. Next, Joe Cope, Bob Smith, Jeannie Morelock, Bob Johnson, and Daryl Gilley; five people who don't know each other but who have all impacted my life and my work. I would love to have all of you over for dinner at the same time. And there are others: Sharon Saunders, Darrell Marks, John Weems, LaRose Spooner, Steve Briggs, and Bonnie Black who deserve mention. For the hundreds of conversations, e-mail messages, shared books and articles, faxes, telephone calls; for the advice and insight, but most of all, for the encouragement and friendship, I am in your debt.

There are a handful of others a bit closer to home whom I must acknowledge. Guy Wendler and Peter Stamats; thank you for encouraging me in this undertaking. For Tom Jackson and Marilyn Osweiler, two of the most honorable people I know and people whom I am lucky to count as friends. And for those who work closest with me: Becky, Suzanne, Steve, Toni, Lorna, Sally, Dennis, Lisa, and Annette. Thanks for keeping me pointed in the right direction.

And finally, I want to thank my Mom and Dad. My Dad was a lover of books and words and I know that he would have been proud of this effort. And I know that my Mom is. Thanks also to my wonderful and patient son, Andy. "Hey bud, the book's done. Let's play." And finally, I would like to thank Pat, my wife. She is my best friend, my greatest adviser, and the most generous person I know. Without her support, this book, and all my successes, both professional and personal, simply would not have happened.

> **"Planning is the organization of hope."**
> —Stephen Blum

Introduction

I well remember the meeting. The president of a good-sized college in the Midwest was huddled with his board on a snowy afternoon. The institution was in trouble. Enrollment was down, and the college had just gone through a round of staff layoffs. The closing of one, perhaps two, academic departments was planned for early spring. The budget was deeply in the red, and the president had asked me to help the college explore its options.

The conversation was surprisingly frank . . . and pointed. Some board members wanted to fire the director of admissions. Others seemed convinced that the faculty needed to work harder. When the president left the room for a short period, one board member openly criticized his leadership. "He has no vision," she said.

As the afternoon wore on, the conversation began to take a new tack. "What we need," said one board member, "is a marketing plan."

"Yes," said another, "we need to advertise. We need to get the word out."

Before adjourning, the board voted to fund a marketing campaign. "We need to show the campus that we are moving forward," said the board chair.

I left campus that evening wondering if marketing could really help that institution.

Thinking back, I am convinced that my deep fascination for higher education marketing—and the genesis for this book—began on that cold afternoon.

A road well traveled

Since that day, I have worked with hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the country. Over the years I have become more convinced than ever that, yes, marketing could have helped that institution—and furthermore, that the

majority of America's colleges, universities, and schools would benefit from a comprehensive marketing plan.

Of course, I don't mean the misdirected marketing campaign proposed by that well-intentioned board member. Rather, I mean a comprehensive approach to marketing that is founded on the following definition:

> **Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives.**

A marketing planning process is one that is built on solid research . . .

- that includes not only promotion strategies but product, price, and place strategies as well
- that seeks to establish vital exchange relationships with key target audiences
- that is designed to achieve specific organizational objectives: objectives outlined in the college or university's mission, vision, and strategic plan

This is the type of marketing that would have helped that institution. These days it is called *integrated marketing.*

But why this book?

Over the years, as I read books and articles on marketing and attended seminars and symposia, I came to four conclusions.

First, very little of the current literature on higher education marketing is really about colleges, universities, and schools. Most of it is a rehash of marketing principles and ideas from the corporate world. Useful at times, but a bit ill-fitting.

Second, much of what passes as marketing is really promotion. There seems to be an underlying sense that many problems could be solved by simply turning up the volume a bit—getting the message out to more people.

Third, almost none of the information on marketing has a true institution-wide focus. Most of it addresses marketing from a single perspective: public relations, recruiting, or fund-raising—it is not integrated marketing.

And finally, none of the material addresses planning in an academic environment, an environment in which the decision-making process is often more important than the quality and utility of the decision itself.

I wrote this book to help address these problems.

A step-by-step approach to marketing

The marketing planning process outlined here is different, and, I hope, important, for a number of reasons.

First, this book uses education as its sole reference point. The steps and processes reflect the very real opportunities and constraints found on campuses. The planning process outlined here recognizes how colleges think and act and sometimes don't act. This book was written specifically for colleges, universities, and schools, not radio stations or manufacturers. Although this book is written more for higher education, private primary and secondary schools can also benefit.

Second, this book is decidedly practical. It includes a great number of "how-to" lists, and steps to follow. It is not intended for the marketing purist, who already has plenty of sources, but for the group or individual who must write and implement a marketing plan.

Third, this book recognizes that a college, university, or school's marketing plan must be consistent with its mission and vision. The planning process outlined here stresses the need for strong, declarative leadership—and shows that marketing is best seen as an extension of, not a replacement for, strategic planning.

Fourth, this marketing planning process is designed for everyone from the novice to the experienced marketer and is highly interactive yet sequential. It moves through three distinct stages:

1. Building the foundation
2. Writing the plan
3. Execution and evaluation

Next, unlike many marketing texts, this book emphasizes the need for evaluation: of the marketing plan, of individual marketing activities, and of the process itself.

Finally, unlike the majority of books on marketing that stress the written plan, this book recognizes that it is not the plan that is important but the planning process. My goal is to help you develop an ongoing process that recognizes, even anticipates, opportunities and obstacles in a fluid and dynamic marketplace.

Organization

The book is organized into three broad sections. The first section makes the case for marketing. Chapter 1 explores the following five challenges and explains how they will affect colleges and universities:

1. The changing demographics of college students
2. Cost to attend and the tuition gap between publics and privates
3. The rise of publics, including two-year institutions, as major players
4. The greater involvement of states in managing their public institutions
5. Increased competition for the donated dollar

Chapter 2 suggests that higher education's major challenges are compounded by administrators' inability or reluctance to make tough decisions in a timely fashion. It then outlines the role that institutional mission, vision, and leadership play in the marketing planning process.

Table I-1.
Outline of Chapters in Section II

Building the Foundation
- Empower the process.
- Clarify your purpose.
- Designate a champion.
- Assemble the marketing team.
- Build the team.
- Define planning relationships and terminology.
- Affirm the unchangeable.
- Establish range of possibilities.
- Decide whether to stay inside or go outside.
- Outline the planning process.

Writing the plan
- Undertake a situational analysis.
- Decide on research.
- Prioritize and finalize SWOT.
- Settle on vivid descriptors.
- Establish the marketing goals.
- Clarify target audiences.
- Write marketing action plans.
- Establish the budget.
- Debug the plan.

Execution and Evaluation
- Execute the plan.
- Evaluate and modify the plan.
- Hold a planning postmortem.

Chapter 3 presents an expanded definition of marketing that focuses on exchange relationships—the need for both target audiences and institutions to be satisfied through the process. Chapter 3 also details the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion.

Chapter 4 explores the differences between qualitative and quantitative research and outlines the need for trend data. Chapter 4 also addresses issues relating to sampling and validity, then reviews the steps for undertaking a research project: creating the agenda, designing the methodology, designing the instrument and questions, drawing the sample, completing the study, inputting and analyzing the data, and presenting the results. The chapter concludes with a list of sources for inexpensive secondary research.

Chapter 5 makes the case that institutional image is your most important asset. It shows how strong images are the foundation for effective student recruiting and fund raising.

Chapter 6 introduces segmentation, an extremely useful yet underutilized marketing tool. Geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral segmentation strategies are crucial for educational institutions to raise dollars and recruit students more effectively.

Section II, on the planning process itself, is the heart of the book. The three chapters in this section (outlined in Table I-1) are designed to move you sequentially through the process.

Chapter 7 addresses the need to empower the marketing planning process, clarify your purpose, and designate a champion. This chapter also discusses who should be on the marketing team and how to build the team, and it defines planning relationships and terminology.

Chapter 8 outlines the seven steps to writing the plan, including undertaking a situational analysis, clarifying marketing goals and target audiences, writing a marketing action plan, budgeting, and debugging the plan.

The last chapter in this section is designed to help you evaluate not only your plan but the overall process.

The third and final section will help you troubleshoot and improve the effectiveness of both your plan and the process so they can better meet your institution's needs and expectations now and in the future.

The book closes with a comprehensive list of secondary research sources; a compilation of marketing, research, and higher education World Wide Web sites; and one of the most exhaustive higher education marketing bibliographies ever assembled.

At the very time that the need for strong leadership in higher education has reached new levels of urgency, academic management is in chains. Indeed, the whole subject of administration in higher education is befuddled by rusty myths and hoary options about authority, management, and leadership.

Section I

Why Marketing, Why Now?

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> **"The great obstacle to progress is not ignorance but the illusion of knowledge."**
> —Daniel Boorstin

Why Marketing, Why Now?

Educational institutions face an unprecedented and sometimes bewildering array of challenges to their growth and prosperity. Founding missions, to some minds, seem increasingly ill-suited for the demands of today's marketplace. Budgets are excruciatingly tight while voices and programs clamor for financial support. Governance is contested at virtually every turn. Increased oversight often leads to unreasonable demands for accountability. A paralyzed decision-making process makes progress difficult, tenuous, and overly politicized. And the recruiting and fund-raising marketplace is very competitive, sometimes even hostile.

Five megatrends

This array of problems facing higher education is not new. What is new is the convergence of five megatrends that alone or together could dramatically affect institutions' ability to exert their own will in the marketplace:

1. The changing demographics of college students
2. Cost to attend and the tuition gap between publics and privates
3. The rise of publics, including two-year institutions, as major players in recruiting and fund raising

4. Greater involvement of states in managing their public institutions
5. Increased competition for the donated dollar

Megatrend No. 1: Changing demographics

There is no magic in demography, no surprises. Demographic projections, particularly those of national scope, are usually forthright, easily documented, and widely accepted. Although the data are usually straightforward, sometimes an understanding of their impact is not.

Table 1-1 shows an important shift in the projected ethnic composition of the

Table 1-1.
Population by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1990-2050 [In thousands. As of July 1. Resident population]

		Race					Not of Hispanic Origin			
Year	Total	White	Black	American Indian[1]	Asian[2]	Hispanic Origin[3]	White	Black	American Indian[1]	Asian[2]
ESTIMATE										
1990	249,402	209,180	30,599	2,073	7,550	22,549	188,601	29,374	1,802	7,076
PROJECTIONS										
Middle Series										
1995	262,820	218,078	33,144	2,241	9,357	26,936	193,566	31,598	1,931	8,788
2000	274,634	225,532	35,454	2,402	11,245	31,366	197,061	33,568	2,054	10,584
2005	285,981	232,463	37,734	2,572	13,212	36,057	199,802	35,485	2,183	12,454
2010	297,716	239,588	40,109	2,754	15,265	41,139	202,390	37,466	2,320	14,402
2020	322,742	254,887	45,075	3,129	19,651	52,652	207,393	41,538	2,601	18,557
2030	346,899	269,046	50,001	3,515	24,337	65,570	209,998	45,448	2,891	22,993
2040	369,980	281,720	55,094	3,932	29,235	80,164	209,621	49,379	3,203	27,614
2050	393,931	294,615	60,592	4,371	34,352	96,508	207,901	53,555	3,534	32,432
Lowest Series										
2050	282,524	213,782	44,477	3,383	20,882	62,230	157,701	40,118	2,793	19,683
Highest Series										
2050	518,903	381,505	81,815	5,384	50,199	133,106	262,140	71,863	4,295	47,498

[1]American Indian represents American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut.
[2]Asian represents Asian and Pacific Islander.
[3]Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race. The information on the total and Hispanic population shown in this report was collected in the 50 States and the District of Columbia and, therefore, does not include residents of Puerto Rico.
Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, 1996.

U.S. population over the next 50 years. From a demographic perspective, there will be little growth, and even some decline, in the Caucasian population. However, we will see strong growth among Hispanics and Asians and a very slight growth among African Americans. There will be little real growth in the number of Native Americans during this time.

Raw census numbers tell part of the story, but percentages tell more. By 2050, Hispanics will compose nearly 25 percent of our population—up from 10 percent in 1997. Asians, meanwhile, will increase as a percentage of our population from 3.5 percent in 1997 to 8.2 percent in 2050. However, the percentage of Caucasians will drop

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from 73.3 percent to 52.8. Some demographers estimate that as an ethnic group, Caucasians will slip into minority status about the year 2060. At that time the United States will have more nonwhites than whites.

But what do such demographic shifts mean? Obviously, in the immediate and foreseeable future, college students are much more likely to be of color than ever before. This issue is both complex and emotionally charged: Whereas these shifts present students of color with the opportunity for unparalleled access to higher education, there is great concern about how this shift will affect the academy.

One clear impact will be economic. A sad reality of our society is that nonwhite populations simply do not, on average, have the financial resources of white populations. Current data show that nonwhite students are much less likely to be able to afford full or significant portions of their tuition; they are more likely to be on financial aid. Even as administrators and faculty look forward to meeting these students' educational needs, they have serious concerns about who will be paying the bills.

The second impact will be on higher education's character and composition. Nonwhite students are less likely to be residential and to attend school full-time, and are more likely to require extensive support services. They are more likely to attend public two- and four-year institutions rather than private ones. For colleges and universities dependent on white, residential students, the impact of this shift will be significant and ongoing.

Along with these demographic shifts will be some attitudinal shifts. Students of today, and tomorrow, are

- Somewhat more conservative than previous generations of students
- Likely to be less interested in the pure liberal arts
- Very program- and outcomes-oriented
- More practical
- More likely to include convenience and access in defining academic quality

Embedded in these demographic shifts is a subtle nuance. We also know that tomorrow's college students are likely to be older and somewhat more likely to arrive on campus with a GED rather than a traditional diploma.

"The full-time, traditional age, residential student with better-than-average academics and some ability to pay will be the minority of the future."

But those aren't our students

Of course, you might be trying to let yourself off the demographic hook by saying, "We don't recruit these kinds of students—this doesn't apply to me or my institution." In a very narrow sense this may be true. But keep in mind one more thought: The full-time, traditional-age, residential student with better-than-average academics and some ability to pay will be the minority for the foreseeable future. Not only will the number of these students decline, but the need for institutions to recruit these students will grow. In short, these students will be the most sought-after cohort in higher education. Institutions with deep pockets, great name recognition, or both will win at recruiting them; institutions with little recognition or money for non-loan-based aid will face extremely challenging times.

Students and their baggage

Tomorrow's students are also much more likely to arrive on campus with unreasonable expectations, or what one sociologist terms "a galloping psychology of entitlement." More and more students believe that you owe them an on-time education even though they will have trouble making decisions, keeping commitments, and being responsible for their actions. I well remember one president reminding me, "Tomorrow's students will be much like their parents, and their parents are people like us."

There is one final characteristic that must be mentioned—perhaps the most troubling one of all. Many of tomorrow's students will arrive on your campus with significant, often long-term physical and emotional health problems. They will come to your institution from broken or abusive homes. They will have been exposed to AIDS. They will be using more drugs, prescribed and illegal, than any previous generation of college students. And alcoholism and binge drinking will continue to be a problem.

"There is increasing evidence that tomorrow's students will not make especially good alumni."

To meet such needs, colleges and universities must be prepared to invest significant resources (time, money, and talent) in assessment, counseling, health services, and, unfortunately, campus security.

The impact on colleges and universities

These trends will affect higher education in two ways. First, there is little debate that they will heighten the already significant stresses on recruiting, financial aid, and student services.

The second impact is more subtle and long-term: There is increasing evidence that tomorrow's students will not make especially good alumni. Because they are less likely to be residential and to partake in traditional campus-life activities—and much more likely to drop in and out, attend part-time, and transfer from one institution to another—they are not as inclined to feel strong loyalty to a single institution.

In 1995, according to Stamats Communications, Inc. research, some 27 percent of all donated dollars came directly from alumni. Another significant portion came from alumni via the corporations and foundations where they work. Alumni loyalty plays a tremendous role in fund raising. That's why campuses must begin active assessment of young alumni needs.

Megatrend No. 2: Cost to attend and tuition gap between publics and privates

The second megatrend is economic, not demographic. It has six dimensions:

1. Cost to attend college
2. Widening tuition gap between publics and privates
3. Falling family contribution
4. Tuition discounting
5. Shifting financial-aid patterns
6. Debt load of college graduates

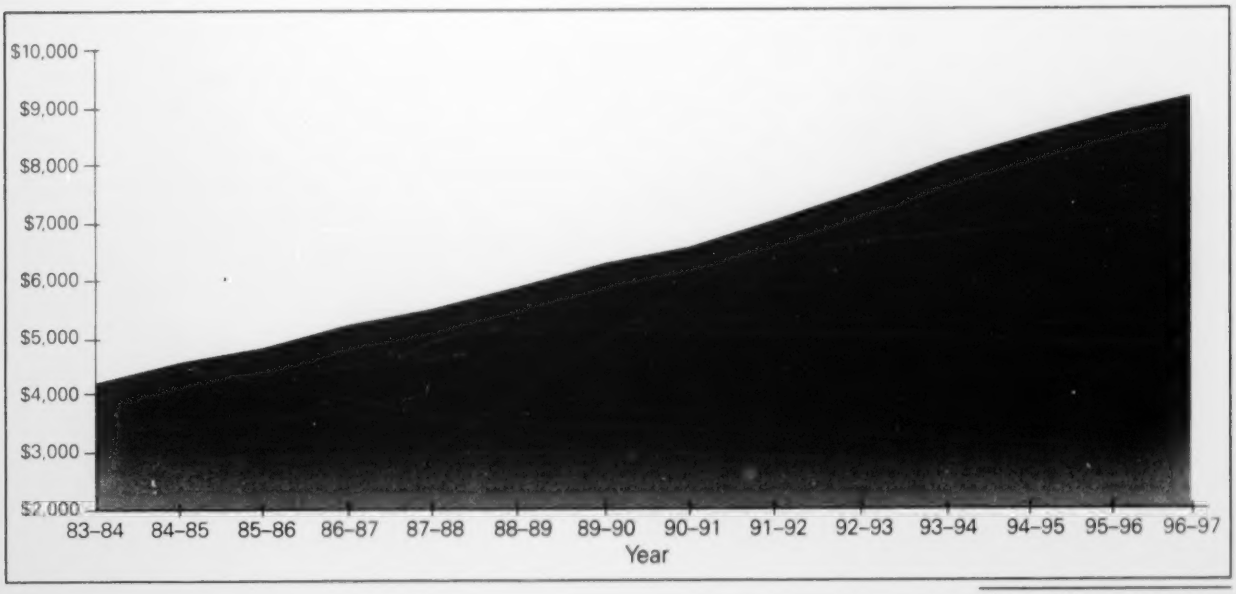
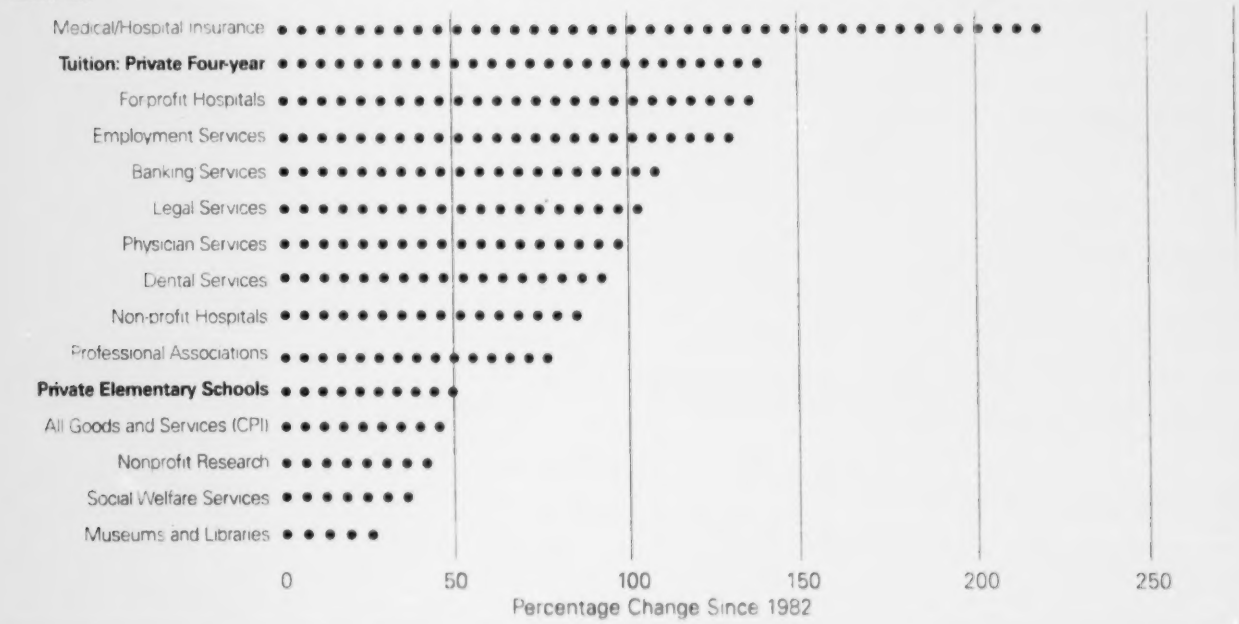


Figure 1-1.
Average Undergraduate Tuition, Fees, Room and Board at All U.S. Colleges and Universities

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, *Digest of Educational Statistics*, 1997, Table 312.

Figure 1-2.
Increase in the Cost of Selected Goods and Services: 1982-1992

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index; Personal Consumption Expenditure Price Indices, 1996.



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College cost

By any measure, attending college is expensive. The literature, both popular and professional, is replete with stories of soaring tuition costs that usually outpace the rate of inflation and the growth of the consumer price index (CPI), in some cases by a factor of two to one.

Figure 1-1 and Figure 1-2 show this rate of increase dramatically. The first shows a 14-year overview of tuition, room, and board charges at all U.S. colleges and universities. The second shows this same increase juxtaposed against the rate of increase for other goods and services in the U.S. economy.

The perception of college cost

The reality of college cost is bad enough. But many constituents perceive college costs as even higher than they really are. Studies by the American Council on Education, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and other associations indicate that both students and parents often overestimate the cost of going to college.

Feeding this angst is the annual media blitz that accompanies the decision by colleges to raise their tuition each year. From *Newsweek* to *USA Today* to the *Washington Monthly*, we see such headlines as these:

- $1,000 a Week—The Scary Cost of College
- How Colleges Are Gouging U
- Middle Class Sees Diploma in Doubt
- Tuition Races Ahead of Inflation—Again
- Highbrow Robbery

"There is little doubt that more and more families believe, without really knowing, that attending college is not within their economic reach."

Certainly this somewhat alarmist presentation of college cost affects the rate at which high school students go on to college. And though the exact impact is difficult to measure, there is little doubt that more and more families believe, without really knowing, that attending college is not within their economic reach. Keep in mind that nationally, only about 50 percent of high school graduates go on to college.

Tuition gap

The second economic trend focuses on the widening tuition gap between public and private education. As Figure 1-3 suggests, the gap between publics and privates is often an order of magnitude or more.

In 1995-96, the average tuition and fees for the 604 four-year U.S. public institutions was $6,325. For the 1,586 four-year privates, the average was $17,851. The tuition gap—the average public/private difference in price—was $11,526.

As colleges become more and more expensive, families of average and even above-average means, especially those with more than one college-bound child, will be increasingly unable to afford the cost. Simple but painful economic realities will narrow their range of options. Where they once might have sent their child to a private college or university, they are now beginning to attend publics. Where they once attended four-year publics, they are now looking at two-year institutions, perhaps with plans to transfer.

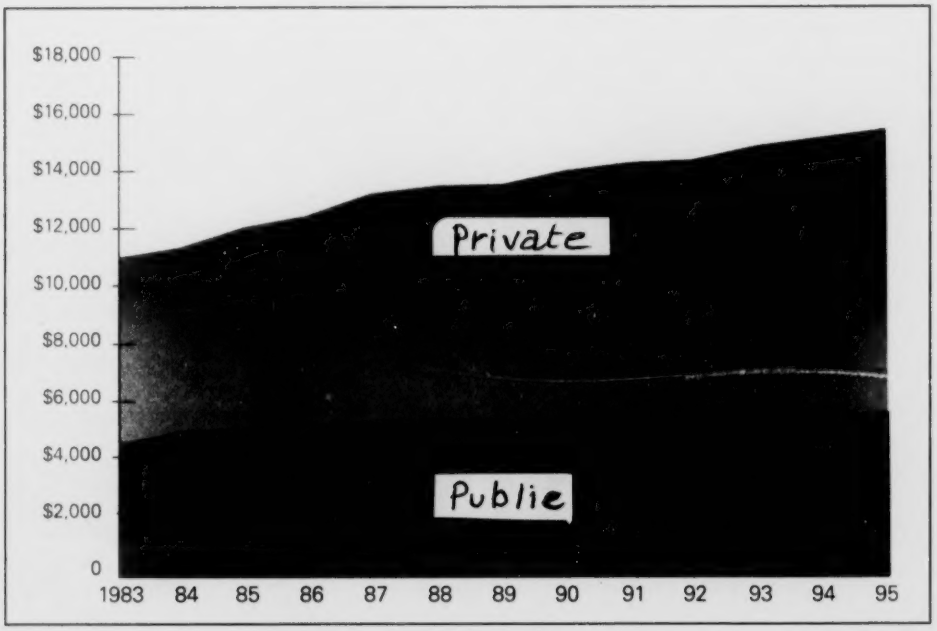

Figure 1-3.
Ten-Year Cost to Attend College: Publics vs. Privates
Source Stamats Communications, Inc.

Falling family income

Because of the very real evidence that family and disposable income will continue to slide well into the next century, we cannot expect college costs to become more manageable. Even as a small group of middle-class families is becoming more affluent—especially those with two wage earners—a much larger group is losing ground. By many estimates, we are seeing a squeeze of the middle class. This is especially compounded by an increasing number of single-parent families. A colleague in financial aid at a Pacific Northwest college told me recently that she is not worried about the ability of affluent families to afford college and even less worried about the institution's ability to help poor students. "What greatly concerns me," she said, "is our ability, and the interest of either the state or the federal government, to meet the financial aid needs of middle-class families. They are being pushed out of higher education."

"Unless private colleges and universities are able to offer significant financial aid, families will be more likely to choose public ones."

Private higher education

The high cost to attend will hurt all colleges and universities, but especially private ones. The tuition gap offers a long-term opportunity for publics. Unless private colleges and universities are able to offer significant financial aid, families that traditionally sent their sons and daughters to private institutions will, in the future, be much more likely to choose public ones.

Family savings rates

This concern about college cost and the tuition gap is especially acute when a family has not saved significant dollars for children's education. Though the quantifiable

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data are sketchy, there is every reason to believe that the rate at which families save for college has stagnated. Fewer are saving enough money even to pay a significant portion of tuition bills.

Choosing on the basis of cost

Families that have saved little will find their educational options severely constricted. They will be much be more inclined in the future to choose a college based not on quality or program but on cost.

An interesting study in an *American Demographics* article by Tibbett Spear makes this point clearly. The magazine noted that in 1994, the average family that intended to send a son or daughter to a private institution estimated that the total cost of attending for four years was $50,000. By the time the student was a junior in high school, though, that same family had saved less than $6,000 toward college.

A 1997 study by Stamats adds a new dimension to our discussion of family savings rates. We found that while the average family has saved about $5,700 for college, some 78 percent of the respondents had saved far less. Not only is the average low, but most families have not even saved that amount.

These data are troubling for three reasons. First, the average family has saved so little. Second, the family has seriously underestimated the cost of a private college. And third, the family has underestimated, by about 20 percent, how long it takes the average student to graduate from college. Too many families have saved too little for a college education that is more expensive than they estimate, and they will be paying tuition, room, and board for a longer period than they think.

Tuition discounting

Another potentially destructive economic trend is tuition discounting: the amount, expressed as a percentage of the total tuition cost, that a college or university discounts tuition by awarding institutional financial aid. For example, let's assume that a college charges $10,000 a year and recruits a class of 500 students. The tuition revenue, if everyone paid full tuition, would be $5 million. However, the college spends $1 million of its operating budget on financial aid. Therefore, the net tuition revenue is actually $4 million. The college has discounted tuition 20 percent. For all practical purposes, its tuition is really $8,000 a year. It has discounted its tuition, but it has not lowered its costs to educate a student.

Table 1-2.
Rise in Percentage of Tuition Discount Rates

Year and Type of Institution	Discount Rate
Public/1994	19.6
Public/1995	20.1
Private/1994	24.7
Private/1995	25.6

Table 1-2 indicates the rise in tuition discount rates for public and private four-year institutions in 1994 and 1995.

This idea is not new; colleges and universities have been discounting tuition since their inception. However, the degree of discounting has taken an alarming turn: More institutions are discounting tuition to a much higher degree. A number of private institutions have tuition discount rates of 35 percent and higher. This places a tremendous burden on their budgets. Once tuition discounting begins, it is very difficult to end.

Excessive discounting is poor financial policy under the best of circumstances.

equals $1,241,000). He said there was no relationship between the budget surplus and the debt load of his students. "Good financial management on our part," he said, "and not good financial management on theirs."

Megatrend No. 3: The impact of publics, including two-year institutions, as major players in recruiting and fund raising

All things being equal, the road ahead for public colleges and universities will be somewhat less troubled than for private ones—for a number of reasons.

First is the perception and reality of cost. Almost universally, students and parents believe that public institutions are less expensive, sometimes significantly so, than private ones. Without even investigating the matter, many families automatically rule out private higher education.

"Public institutions are getting much better at telling their story to audiences that are increasingly interested in hearing it."

Second, tomorrow's college students are much more likely to be older, of color, and attending part-time. Public institutions, particularly two-year colleges, have established a strong track record of accommodating the unique and disparate needs of this diverse clientele.

Third, there is the issue of quality. Dick Moll, in *The Public Ivys*, was one of the first to make the case that some public institutions are doing an outstanding job of demonstrating solid quality at a reasonable price. Unfortunately for the privates, this is occurring just when privates are having a tough time justifying their higher cost. As the marketplace has been demonstrating, it is hard for private institutions to position themselves against lower-cost public ones that consistently demonstrate high quality—and more and more are.

Fourth, publics are much more likely to attract huge affinity groups—thousands of students who never really considered a private institution. Each year, for example, some 6,000 young Buckeyes decide that their immediate future rests with Ohio State. In many cases, these students have assumed since middle school or even younger that they would attend OSU. Whether it is the scarlet and gray of Ohio State, the yellow and green of Oregon, or even the red and white of Maryland, such large public institutions have a strong following due in large part to their tradition of sports. For students who decide early in life that they will attend a particular institution, others have to work very hard to be considered seriously.

Fifth, publics are, by definition, public. This is a tremendous safety net. Though they may change and evolve, very few are in danger of actually failing. States invest millions, even billions of dollars and enormous prestige in their higher education systems each year, and it is always much easier to keep supporting them than to face the political and economic fallout of trying to close one down.

Next is the issue of size. Not only are publics generally larger, enrolling more students and having larger budgets, but they have the potential for tremendous alumni networks. The University of Minnesota system, for example, has 350,000 living alumni.

Finally, public institutions are improving at promoting themselves. Publics have always enjoyed the high visibility of their athletic teams. Now the quality of their

However, it is especially problematic when the size of the freshman class is static. If your classes are shrinking, tuition discounting may put your institution in a financial straitjacket from which it may never escape.

Shifting financial aid patterns

Even as families struggle to keep up with rising tuition, room, and board costs, we have seen a dramatic shift in the ratio of grants to loans in the typical financial aid package. As the graph in Figure 1-4 indicates, in 1975 the typical package was about 60 percent grants and about 20 percent loans. Two decades later, however, the typical aid package was 20 percent grants and 60 percent loans. As a result, more students are graduating with more debt—often very significant debt.

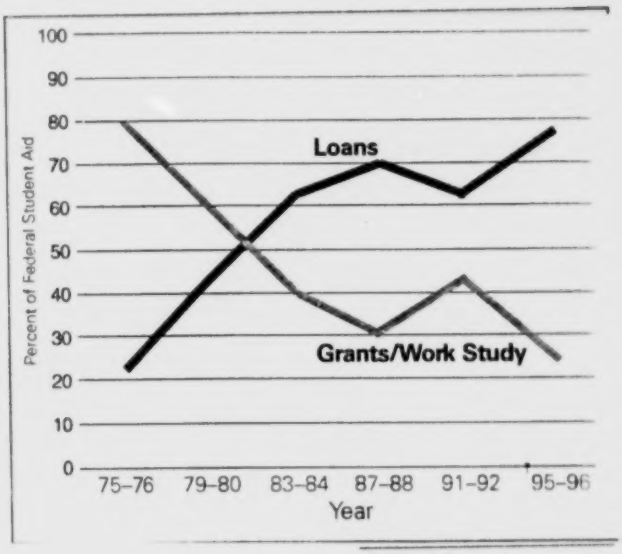

Figure 1-4.
Change in Composition of Typical Financial Aid Package, 1975 through 1995

Source: College Board, *Trends in Student Aid: 1986–1996*, Table 1 and Appendix Table A.

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Graduate debt load

The final economic trend concerns the debt load of college graduates. Tomorrow's graduates of both public and private campuses are facing an increasing level of college debt.

In 1995, the median debt for all students at graduation was $10,150. There is considerable evidence that the debt for students attending a private institution is much higher—some say nearly double the median. Students attending a public institution are likely to owe less. See Table 1-3.

Although this debt is troublesome for several reasons, one in particular stands out: Students who are interested in social work, education, and even the ministry are looking at their potential debt and opting for majors and careers that are more lucrative. Thus debt penalizes not just students but society.

The September 1997 *Postsecondary Education Opportunity* report highlights the impact of college debt on students and graduates. We know from experience that high debt rate negatively affects time to degree, graduation rate, career choices after graduation, and even when to marry and how many children to have. And alumni directors are keenly aware of another impact of college debt. As long as a graduate is paying off loans, he or she is unlikely to think positively about donating money to the institution.

One final comment about graduate debt load. A couple of years ago I had a chance to meet with the president of a top private college in Massachusetts. He was relishing its ability to run a budget surplus of $1.3 million each year. Earlier that day I had learned from the financial aid office that graduates owed, on average, $7,300 in loans. I also knew that the college graduated about 170 seniors each year. I asked the president if he was aware that the amount of his budget surplus was strikingly similar to the amount owed by his graduating class (170 students times $7,000 per student

Table 1-3.
Graduate Debt Load

Year	Percentage with Debt	Median Debt
1977	34.0	$ 2,000
1980	34.9	$ 2,500
1984	44.8	$ 5,000
1986	50.1	$ 4,800
1990	45.0	$ 7,000
1994	53.3	$ 9,100
1995	59.1	$10,150

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advertising and recruiting materials has never been higher. Public institutions are getting much better at telling their story to audiences that are increasingly interested in hearing it.

When I think about the rise of public institutions in the marketplace, I am often reminded of the quote attributed to Admiral Isoruku Yamamoto just after he learned that the Japanese Imperial Navy had bombed Pearl Harbor: "I fear," he said, "that we have woken a great sleeping giant and filled that giant with a terrible resolve." Today's giants are public colleges and universities, and as they awake, they will cast an enormous shadow across higher education.

Megatrend No. 4: The greater involvement of states in managing their public institutions

The future will not be completely rosy for public institutions. In fact, from a funding and governance perspective, public four-year and, to a lesser degree, two-year institutions will be in for a stressful time. Most of this stress will emanate from a single reality—citizen reluctance to keep funding higher education without a clearer sense of where these dollars are going. One president calls this "taxpayer cynicism" and seems to resent taxpayers' intrusion into college affairs. Whether cynical or not, taxpayers have a right to know that their dollars are being used wisely and they are becoming more effective in exercising this right.

"The future will not be completely rosy for public institutions."

Though many of the nuances of this taxpayer "revolt" have yet to be played out, we can expect the following five actions and reactions:

1. More direct oversight from legislatures, political appointees, and governors
2. More centralized decision-making from coordinating commissions
3. Less duplication of programs, with duplication determined not by campuses but by state agencies
4. A declining contribution of state dollars
5. More dependence of public institutions on tuition and fees

The first three trends portend a decline in institutional autonomy, decision-making, and governance. The remaining two will help fuel the interest of public institutions in recruiting and fund raising and increase the already frantic competition between publics and privates.

Naturally, there will be a direct relationship between dwindling tax dollars and an institution's interest in aggressive recruiting and marketing strategies. Thomas Wallace, writing in *Change*, sums up the situation. In his searing article, "Public Higher Education Finance: The Dinosaur Age Persists," he describes "the Big Myth"—the belief by public institution administrators and faculty that as soon as the economy improves, state legislatures will invest enormous sums of tax dollars in higher education. Those days, he says, are over.

Megatrend No. 5: Increased competition for the donated dollar

This final megatrend has two dimensions: the greater competition for gifts, and the

shift from private colleges and universities receiving the lion's share of corporate gifts to public institutions receiving them.

If it seems that everyone is fund raising, it's because everyone is. According to the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, in 1995 there were 27,900 new charities, and the nonprofit sector has expanded four times faster than the economy in each of the last 25 years. Nonprofits account for nearly $1 trillion in assets—that's six percent of the GNP—and employ one out of every 18 workers. Nonprofits hire cultivators, demographers, and prospect researchers. They analyze databases and zip codes and giving patterns. They hold dinners and telethons and sweepstakes. And they rake in billions and billions of dollars.

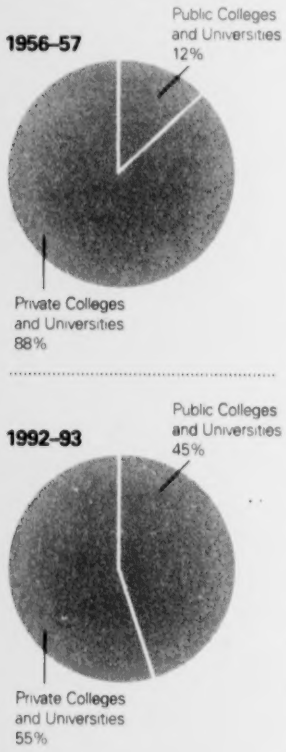
Too often, solicitations from colleges and universities are lost in the shuffle. In fact, I asked a friend who graduated from Stanford and lives on the West Coast to keep a year-long tally of how many times he was contacted by telephone and mail for donations. After 300 he quit counting. Asked if Stanford had been in touch, he said, "How should I know? I couldn't keep track of it all."

Another friend, in the throes of his first big capital campaign, called one night to talk about a gift that he had been cultivating. "We had it in the bag," he said, "but then we lost it. A museum got there before we could sign them."

The competition for donated dollars has a curious twist that again shows how public institutions are making their mark. In 1956-57, private two- and four-year institutions received 88 percent of each corporate donated dollar. Forty years later, that number had slipped to 55 percent. There is every indication that the percentage given to private higher education will continue to slide. See Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-5.
Private-Public Share Corporate Giving, 1956–57 and 1992–93

Source: *Voluntary Support of Education 1996* and *Voluntary Support of America's Colleges and Universities 1956-57*. Council for Aid to Education. Reprinted with permission.



The tiering of America's colleges and universities

It is hard to predict how these megatrends will affect individual colleges and universities. However, there is some evidence, largely anecdotal at this point, that institutions will find themselves arranged in four tiers. The first tier will contain a relatively small number of public and private institutions that will flourish. Their destinies are largely secure. They are well-funded and well-known, with supportive, powerful, and often very vocal alumni. Public and private multiversities such as Penn State and the University of Southern California, research institutions such as Johns Hopkins University and MIT, large privates such as Vanderbilt, and smaller privates like Brown and Grinnell are in this first tier.

The second tier contains a great number of institutions, both public and private, that will survive and may even flourish if managed adroitly and aggressively. The quality of their future will relate directly to the quality of their leadership.

The third tier contains institutions at risk: a smaller number, largely but not all private, that will face tremendous challenges. Some of these will move up to the second tier. Some will move down to the fourth tier. But most will remain in the third tier, and their future will be hesitant and embattled.

The final tier, composed largely of privates, contains institutions that will fail. Their small size, often under 800 students, and limited endowment will hinder their

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Quick Glance

"At Risk" Characteristics

So what characteristics describe "at risk" institutions? In *Surviving the Eighties*, Lewis Mayhew developed an initial list of characteristics that describe them. While the title of the book is somewhat dated, its insights are not. Over the years I have expanded his original list to include the following:

- Lack of aggressive, knowledgeable leadership
- Frequent administrative or faculty turnover
- Loss of institutional focus
- Weak or inaccurate image
- Diminished support from its founding/nurturing public
- High operation costs compared to cohort
- Overdependency on tuition and tuition increases
- Increased institutional debt
- Small or decreasing endowment or tapping endowment to meet operating expenses
- Deferred maintenance
- Low freshman-to-sophomore retention rates
- Low graduation rates
- Difficulties in student recruiting
  - Fewer students in primary market
  - Fewer full- and fuller-pay students
  - Greater dependency on financial aid
  - Abnormally high or low amounts spent to recruit a student
- Difficulties in fund raising
  - Increased competition
  - History of small or unsuccessful capital campaigns
  - Increased competition for gifts that were historically theirs
  - Small percentage of active donors, especially alumni and trustees
  - Abnormally high cost to raise a dollar
- Poor morale
- Inflexible, bloated, or moribund curriculum that is controlled by faculty
- Lengthened time to graduate
- Faculty militancy or apathy
- Increased use of part-time faculty

ability to manage internal conflicts and marketplace challenges. They simply will not have the budgets, resources, and external support they need to survive. By some estimates, eight to 10 percent of the nation's colleges are in this bottom tier, and unfortunately colleges that the *1997 HEP Directory* notes as closed include Phillips College of Mobile, Alaska Junior College, Baptist Christian College, Spencer College, Vennard College, and Northeast Institute of Education. The odds are high that this list will grow much longer in the years to come.

Colleges and universities respond

Administrators, particularly those from third- and fourth-tier institutions, are responding to these five megatrends in a variety of ways. Some, like one small Kansas college, are in denial. They refuse to admit the magnitude of these challenges—blind-

ly, but not blissfully, following a path chosen a century before. Others, such as a small, directionless church-related college in Illinois, hunker down, waiting for the ill winds to pass by. They know things aren't right, but they refuse to face the challenges that threaten them.

Some, like a public regional institution in California, latch on to the newest management fad with the zeal of a new convert. They hold meetings, build teams, and revise policies and procedures. They manage by bestseller and sing the praises of the latest management fad until the next quick fix makes the conference and workshop circuit.

Others, like one four-year public in Michigan, react and react again. They quickly change programs, policies, and even chief administrators, believing that their willingness to react will be enough.

There is one final group of colleges and universities—a small but growing one. Perhaps borrowing a page from a text used by their business faculty, these administrators have initiated a carefully designed planning process. They have begun to assess their marketplace carefully and systematically, rank their target audiences, and develop realistic, well-funded marketing goals. They have chosen to respond to current and coming challenges with a new or renewed commitment to visionary leadership and marketing.

2

> "There go my people. I must find out where they are going so I can lead them."
>
> —Alexandre Ledru-Rollin

Vision and Leadership in a New Era of Planning

A new era for planning

We are entering a new era for planning in higher education. In the first era, we planned in response to plenty. This time, we plan in response to scarcity. One college president noted that higher education has moved from the Golden Age to the Age of Survival.

In the first chapter of this book I outlined some of the significant challenges facing higher education, including

- The changing demographics of college students
- Cost to attend and the tuition gap between publics and privates
- The rise of publics, including two-year institutions, as major players
- The greater involvement of states in managing their public institutions
- Increased competition for the donated dollar

Exacerbating these challenges is a crisis in leadership: Too many colleges and universities are unable to develop effective and timely solutions. At a time when good

decisions are needed most, institutions' ability to make them is at an all-time low. The ability of individual colleges and universities to navigate a safe course in increasingly treacherous seas has been severely hindered by what George Keller, in *Academic Strategy*, calls a stalemate in the exercise of power on the American campus: "At the very time that the need for strong leadership in higher education has reached new levels of urgency, academic management is in chains. Indeed, the whole subject of administration in higher education is befuddled and bound by rusty myths and hoary options about authority, management, and leadership."

Looking over our shoulders

The challenges facing America's colleges and universities are far more complex than changing demographics, smaller budgets, and more competition for donations and students. These problems are significant, but higher education has always had problems and surely always will. What is more significant is our inability to respond effectively.

"The American college or university is a prototypic organization anarchy."

In one of my favorite quotes, Michael Cohen and James March write in a 1972 issue of *Administrative Science Quarterly*:

> The American college or university is a prototypic organization anarchy. It does not know what it is doing. Its goals are either vague or in dispute. Its technology is familiar but not understood. Its major participants wander in and out of the organization. These factors do not make a university a bad organization or a disorganized one, but they do make it a problem to describe, understand, and lead.

How bad is it? Consider the following excerpt from a May 1995 article in *Fortune* magazine by Shawn Tully:

> Here's a line of business whose customer base is shrinking. Rivals battle for market share by offering deep discounts. If they hold the line on prices, they risk losing out to cheaper, state-subsidized competitors. Their physical plants are falling apart. They can't fire their highest-paid workers—who put in far less than 40-hour workweeks—and federal law says that even the laggards never have to retire.
>
> Sound pretty bad? It gets worse. The CEO isn't free to run the business; he or she needs the workers' approval for most major decisions. The pressures of managing-by-compromise force most bosses to depart within four years. As Thomas Hobbes, the 17th-century English philosopher, put it, their lives are nasty, brutish, and short.
>
> Welcome to the Byzantine business of higher education.

While some may argue that the article in *Fortune* overgeneralizes—and it probably does—there are myriad other individuals, organizations, and associations with a similar take on the challenges, especially those involving leadership, that face higher education.

The April 1996 *Policy Perspectives* from the Pew Higher Education Roundtable focused almost exclusively on decision-making and responsibility in higher education. The Roundtable notes that "however justified the academy may consider itself to be in slowing its own transformation, the political and economic as well as cultural

pressures for change have now grown more punitive. Voices from all quarters are calling for a reexamination of what institutions do and how they do it in light of the realities of the 20th century. In the minds of critics, as well as many supporters, there is no reason why higher education should hold itself aloof from the need to serve customers, to supply wants rather than define needs, or to pursue and husband the resources with the same assiduousness as other businesses."

When I think about how some, perhaps many, faculty and administrators react to decision-making, I am reminded of the words of Charles Handy. Writing in *The Age of Paradox*, Handy notes that "people clamor for rights but ignore their responsibilities, want democracy but expect others to sort out all its problems for them, complain when others take initiative but take no initiative themselves."

According to the Pew *Policy Perspectives*, "it is the campus executive . . . who is caught between societal pressure for change and the faculty's wish to maintain the academy in the form they have known. Administrators are charged by their faculty to afford protection from the very pressures that the institution's external constituencies are, with increasing resolve, bringing to bear."

Some may say this is an unduly pessimistic appraisal of campus decision-making. But those of us who have worked at colleges and universities recognize the reality of these words.

The need for leadership

There is only one legitimate response to the problems facing higher education: strong leadership. Leadership committed to listening widely and carefully, to thinking critically, to planning strategically, and to acting boldly.

Burt Nanus, in *The Leader's Edge: The Seven Keys to Leadership in a Turbulent World*, notes that leaders take charge, make things happen, dream dreams, and then translate those dreams into reality. Nanus goes on to say that "leaders attract the voluntary commitment of followers, energize them, and transform organizations into new entities with greater potential for survival, growth, and excellence. Effective leadership empowers an organization to maximize its contribution to the well-being of its members and the larger society of which it is a part. If managers are known for their skills in solving problems, then leaders are known for being masters in designing and building institutions—they are the architects of the organization's future."

The problem with paradigms

It is very difficult to discuss leadership at any level—even such a cursory examination as laid out here—without discussing paradigms.

A paradigm is an accepted way of looking at something on the basis of experience, background, and perception. As you may know from experience, paradigms are both stabilizing and debilitating. A paradigm can provide stability, but it can also shield you too long from necessary change and adaptation.

Table 2-1.
Old Paradigms in Higher Education

The demographic downturn is nearly over, and soon the pool of traditional-age students will increase in size.
The majority of students anticipate attending college full-time.
Private higher education will continue to be perceived as of generally higher quality than public higher education.
Public institutions will soon receive substantial increases in state dollars.
Alumni will continue to support the institutions from which they received their first degree.
Student success is determined by grades.
Campus life will center around athletics and clubs.
Most students are interested in a traditional liberal arts, residential, classroom-based education.
Corporations and foundations will continue to support higher education at a substantial level.
The marketplace will continue to absorb double-digit tuition increases.

Joel Barker, writing in *Future Edge*, points out that new paradigms put everyone practicing the old paradigm at great risk. The higher one's position, the greater the risk. The better you are at your paradigm, the more you have invested in it, the more you have to lose by changing paradigms. Barker reminds us that when we are in the middle of a paradigm, it is hard to imagine any other. As one cartoonist noted simply, "Shift happens."

One of the great ironies in higher education is that most administrators and faculty who make decisions remember, as their pivotal paradigm, their own college experience—an experience that holds true for fewer and fewer students each year. They remember dorms, not residence halls. They remember going to school full-time. They remember campus life vibrant with activities and athletics. They remember a college experience that many of today's—and tomorrow's—students will simply never experience for themselves.

Many administrators and faculty believe the paradigms listed in Table 2-1 still define higher education even though data and recent experiences suggest that a shift has occurred.

Leadership roles

According to Karl Albrecht in *The Northbound Train: Finding the Purpose, Setting the Direction, Shaping the Destiny of Your Organization*, today's leaders have four distinct roles:

1. **The leader as visionary:** creates meaning by crafting the vision, mission, and direction that define the focus of the enterprise.
2. **The leader as team-builder:** puts the right people in the right places for the top-level leadership team, welds them into a single-minded core of advocacy for the common cause, capitalizes on their individual strengths and resources, and continually develops them as team and individual leaders who can serve the mandate required of them.
3. **The leader as a living symbol:** the individual who "walks the talk" in a highly visible way, demonstrating not necessarily a charismatic style of leadership but a constant and unrelenting pattern of reinforcing the institution's vision.
4. **The leader as buck-stopper:** faces the difficult issues, discerns the truth of challenges, and makes the tough decisions and dramatic changes that have to be made. While this involves open-minded listening and collaboration with the leadership team, it is the leader who must ultimately face the music and manage the organization's response to critical issues.

Visionaries as leaders

Burt Nanus, writing in *Visionary Leadership*, views leaders in a slightly different way. While he agrees that there are four dimensions, his are oriented toward inside and outside environment and present and future domains. Figure 2-1 outlines these domains.

The *Direction-setter* selects and articulates the target in the future external envi-

ronment toward which the organization should direct its energies. This is the meaning of vision. To be a good direction-setter, you must be able to set a course toward a destination that others will recognize as representing real progress for the organization.

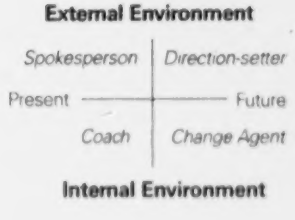
The *Change Agent* is responsible for catalyzing changes in the internal environment. To be a good change agent, you must be able to articulate developments in the outside world, assess their implications for your institution, create the sense of urgency and priority for changes that your vision requires in light of these developments, promote experimentation, and empower people to make the necessary changes. You must also be able to build flexibility into your organization and operations and encourage prudent risk-taking.

The *Spokesperson*—as a skilled speaker, a concerned listener, and the very embodiment of the organization's vision—is the chief advocate and negotiator for the organization and its vision with outside constituencies. To be an effective spokesperson, you must be the major negotiator with other organizations and the builder of networks of external relationships to provide useful ideas, resources, support, or information for your organization. You—and your vision—must become both the medium and the message that express what is worthwhile, attractive, and exciting about the future of your organization.

The *Coach* is a team-builder who empowers individuals in the organization and passionately "lives the vision," thereby serving as a mentor and example for those whose efforts are necessary to make the vision become reality.

These four roles—direction-setter, change agent, spokesperson, and coach—together define the job of the visionary leader. They are all equally important, and no one can be a successful leader without excelling at all of them.

Figure 2-1.
Leadership Domains



Leaders as planners

Traditionally, most leaders have seen their job as developing logical, beautiful, nicely presented schemes and scenarios. Working in front of a word processor or spreadsheet, they tend, as George Keller notes in *Academic Strategy*, to overlook or at least underappreciate people's egos, politics, tradition, and the need to have their plans enacted. Leaders as planners were often much more concerned with getting the plan written than achieving the plan's goals.

But not anymore. The new wave of leaders, the leaders who have as their overarching goal the success of the institution, are more interested in getting good things done than with merely conceiving them. They are interested in results—function rather than simply form.

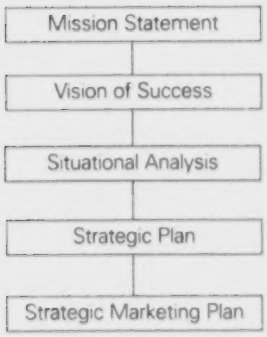
Where plans begin – a renewed sense of mission

All marketing plans and strategies must be founded on the institution's mission—its *raison d'être*. Marketing plans must be a logical and even heartfelt extension of an institution's mission. If the mission and planning efforts are not in congruence, then

something is deeply flawed. It is destructive to the institution and deceptive to the marketplace to develop and execute a plan that is inconsistent with the institution's mission. Not surprisingly, such efforts at reconciling fundamental incongruencies will, and should, fail.

Missions describe founding principles and philosophies, people and events. Missions describe what was important once and still is. Missions describe core, shared values—values the campus community has decided are unassailable. As such, when an incongruency between an institution's mission and its marketing plan arises, the mission is seldom at fault. More often than not, campus administrators, perhaps responding to a crisis, have launched a quick fix. Without taking the time to look inward at their mission, they have chosen to act. And when a new crisis occurs or another opportunity arises, they will act again, caring little that their actions and reactions, without the stabilizing influence of the institution's mission, are whipping the institution first in one direction and then in another.

Figure 2-2.
Marketing, Mission, Vision, and Strategy



Vision as direction

Your mission is an essential declaration of purpose. But that's not enough: You also need vision—a sense of where you want to go. John Bryson, in *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, notes that missions must be expanded in a "vision of success." Whereas your mission clarifies an organization's purpose, or why it should be doing what it does, vision clarifies what the organization should look like as it fulfills its mission. Mission statements are descriptive; vision statements are prophetic. Missions are instructive; visions are inspiring. Mission statements are printed in the catalog or hung on a wall. Vision statements are told and lived in the soul of the institution and its followers.*

As Figure 2-2 suggests, vision is founded on an institution's mission. In today's complex environment, vision is more important than ever. The myriad options and opportunities before today's colleges and universities often distract and entice, confound and confuse. Vision provides a sense of direction in this sometimes difficult landscape.

The need for vision

Nanus, as noted earlier, defines vision as "a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization." He goes on to say that there is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future that is widely shared.

Karl Albrecht uses a metaphor, "the northbound train," to describe how impor-

*Many of these insights and thoughts on vision were outlined in an unpublished paper by Dr. Robert Smith, Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Martin. This paper is quoted at length and with permission on the following pages.

tant vision is to an organization. Albrecht says that this image from his book *The Northbound Train* conveys an unwavering commitment to a particular direction. "Think about the implications of a northbound train: purpose and direction," he says.

> No vision statement or mission statement can ever make much sense unless it originates in some valid concept about what it takes to succeed. It is not a platitude. It is not a slogan. It is not an exercise in journalism; it is an exercise in careful, clear, creative, disciplined, and mature thought. It provides a critical success premise that leaders can understand, commit to, and dramatize to others. The idea of a moving train also conveys a strong sense of momentum, of unstoppable, implacable movement in an unambiguous direction.

Albrecht notes that leaders and followers must have a clear image of this northbound train. The key word is image—something that you can describe and that people can see in their mind's eye. It is a mental picture of an enterprise, operating in an environment, performing to some criterion of excellence, and appreciated for what it contributes. He writes:

> Vision statements are living elements of the institution full of their own challenges. They are kept alive by repetition in everyday activities and by rewarding efforts consistent with the vision. Therefore, leaders have to tie the vision to the work of the followers so the followers can see what role they have in achieving the vision and how important they are to achieving the vision.

Vision as catalyst

How important is a shared vision of success to a college or university? Borrowing from Bryson, Nanus, and others, we can quickly determine the powerful and essential benefits of a strong vision:

- The right vision attracts commitment and energizes people.
- The right vision creates meaning in people's lives.
- The right vision establishes a standard of excellence.
- Organization members are given specific, reasonable, and supportive guidance about what is expected of them and why. Stakeholders see how they fit into the big picture.
- A vision helps clarify the organization's definition of success and desirable behavior, thereby helping people discriminate among preferred and undesirable actions and outcomes.
- An articulated vision lessens internal debate and helps the institution focus its resources and energy. Less time will be expended on debating what to do, how to do it, and why, and more time can be devoted simply to getting on with the institution's business. An agreed-upon vision may contribute to a significant reduction in organizational conflict.
- A clear vision of success provides an effective substitute for leadership. When the vision is clear, there is less need for someone to point the way continually; people are more able and inclined to lead and manage themselves.

- A vision can be inspirational and motivating. If a vision of success becomes a calling, an enormous amount of individual energy and dedication can be released in pursuit of a forceful vision.

Nanus introduces the reader to Charles Garfield, a computer scientist who has written extensively about what he calls "mission psychology." Garfield worked at NASA in the Apollo 11 era and well remembers the intense fervor with which people worked toward the one superordinate goal they all understood. President John F. Kennedy declared it in 1961 when he stated, "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth."

Kennedy's declaration became the manifesto, the organizing principle that gave meaning and direction not only to the space program but to the professional lives of many creative technical people in government and the aerospace industry. Says Garfield, "I had never seen such a group of people work with such absolute focus and fervor as those people, who saw it as their own personal mission to send astronauts to the moon. They worked incredibly long hours, under intense pressure, and they loved it."

Colleges and universities would benefit greatly from a vision that captivates their campus communities as much as the vision to place a man on the moon captivated our nation.

Vision in higher education

Are there visions in higher education that can foster a mission psychology? Are there visions that captivate, inspire, and galvanize? Consider the following three:

- We will be a premier Catholic liberal arts institution, educating thinkers with principles. — Small, urban Catholic college
- We will establish Houston Baptist University as America's premier, urban Christian university in next seven to ten years.
- We will be clearly established and recognized as a comprehensive public university which, through teaching, research, and public service, becomes a center for higher education in the nation. — Urban regional four-year institution

Determining whether you need a (new) vision

Although there is no simple way to ascertain whether your vision is still doing the job, there are some warning signs that your current one may no longer be adequate. First, according to Nanus, is evidence of confusion about purpose. Do your key people frequently disagree about your direction, your target audiences, or your overall purpose? Second is pessimism about the future or cynicism about the present. Do faculty, staff, and administrators complain about few challenges or a lack of fun?

Is the college or university losing legitimacy, market share and position, or its reputation for innovation? Are other campuses doing a better job meeting the needs of students you once served?

Does your college or university seem out of touch with trends in the environment? Do trustees or advisory groups suggest you might have lost a bit of your edge or might not be keeping up with changes in the marketplace, in education, and in teaching technology?

Are there signs of a decline in pride? Are committee assignments slipping, routine meetings skipped, deadlines missed?

Is there excessive risk-avoidance, with people abiding in, and sometimes taking shelter behind, narrow job descriptions, unwilling to accept responsibility for new projects or resisting change?

Is there no shared sense of progress or momentum? Is it difficult for some of your department heads to articulate how much things are improving? Do they still feel they have an attractive future with the institution?

Is there a hyperactive rumor mill, with people constantly trying to find out through the grapevine what is in store for them or the organization? Is the grapevine more likely to be believed than formal communication from senior administrators?

The vision process

Though the president is often the catalyst for vision, an institution's vision is seldom created by a single person. Generally, there are two approaches to developing a vision. The first approach is relatively autocratic, the second more consensual. The challenge, of course, is deciding which approach is best for you and your institution.

If your institution is in peril and significant internal and external stakeholders recognize the need for timely action, then it is more permissible for a president—after a careful analysis of the institution, its audiences (both internal and external), and the marketplace—to declare a vision.

However, if the institution has a history of consensual decision-making, and if faculty, staff, administrators, and even students are often involved in debating issues and setting priorities, then an autocratic vision process will not work. Internal and external stakeholders must be involved.

There is an important rule about establishing a vision that must not be overlooked. In the absence of a recognized crisis, if you fail to involve internal and external stakeholders in creating the vision, you run the risk of that vision's never taking hold. Remember, a campus culture will almost always outlast its leadership.

Says Robert Smith:

> An institution in crisis, moving in the wrong direction, or without a reserve of talented potential leaders will not likely develop a shared vision without the forceful persuasive powers of the single leader. In this culture, the leader may have to set the tone, direction, and specifics of a vision for others to follow.
>
> However, some cultures have a core set of values, direction, and a sense of purpose but lack unified focus and commitment to action. In this culture, the leader resurrects a vision from the other team members and, using shared ownership, brings focus and direction to

the organization. This approach recognizes that frustration, alienation, disillusion, and morale are closely tied to a lack of shared vision.

Once the college or university has a team-derived and focused vision statement, then the energy is focused on achieving the vision.

Properties of a good vision

Sometimes a vision just feels right. Other visions are less obvious. Generally, however, the right vision for a college or university should be

- Future-oriented,
- Utopian—clearly offering a better future for the organization,
- Appropriate—consistent with mission, history, values, and culture,
- Reflecting high ideals and standards of excellence,
- Clear in purpose and direction,
- Able to inspire enthusiasm and encourage commitment, and
- Ambitious.

Negotiating the vision

"The issue is not usually a lack of visions but the institution's will and resolve to declare a single vision and stick with it."

After working with a number of colleges and universities, I believe that vision often becomes an extension, even a personification, of the president. On the other hand, as Jeffrey Pfeffer noted in several of his books (see bibliography, page 207), visions are often coalitional—something to be negotiated among rival coalitions. A committee of six well-intended faculty, administrators, and alumni can easily come up with half a dozen distinctive visions. The issue is not usually a lack of visions but the institution's will and resolve to declare a single vision and stick with it. Bryson, based on an interview with Lonnie Hegelson, reminds us that to construct a compelling vision, decision-makers must be courageous. They must envision and listen to their best selves. And they must be disciplined enough to affirm the vision in the present and to work hard to make it real in the here and now.

This is a ticklish issue. Even in an age of egalitarianism drawn from a tradition of collegiality, one individual—the president—is ultimately responsible for institutional vision. It is her or his responsibility to assess internal coalitions and external opportunities and obstacles and then declare a direction. It is her or his responsibility to provide the impetus to vision.

Regardless of the process, or how much the vision is shared, some factions will always object. Some will detract. Some may even seek to undermine. Keller, writing in *Academic Strategy*, reminds us that although consensus will never be achieved, neither should active dissent be allowed: "Participation is imperative. There need not be full consensus; there seldom is. Dissent must be permitted, although sabotage should not be." •

Articulating the vision to the campus community

A vision must be articulated to the entire campus community before it acquires the force necessary to change an organization and move it in an intended direction.

Vision not shared is not vision.

The key to gaining widespread commitment to a new vision is to present it in such a way that people want to participate and will freely choose to do so. This does not begin with the simple communication of a declared vision but must be a salient element of the overall visioning process.

I well remember making a presentation before a president and his five chief administrators. I asked whether the institution had a vision for success. All nodded. I then asked them each to take out a piece of paper and write out the vision. As I read them aloud, it was clear that the vision was not as shared or communicated as they thought. I also remember visiting Baylor University a few years ago. I asked a member of the grounds crew if he knew Baylor's vision. "Sure," he said, "I have a copy of it right here." The man pulled a laminated card from his shirt pocket. On it was Baylor's mission and vision.

"Leaders get others to buy into their dreams..."

Modeling the way

In *The Leadership Challenge*, James M. Kouzes and Barry Poser write that at a faculty convocation at Santa Clara University, the president, Reverend William J. Rewak, S.J., spoke eloquently about the changes anticipated for the campus. After he showed slides of planned new buildings and gardens, he said: "Vision needs management, electricity, and concrete." Grand dreams, he reminded us, cannot become significant realities with *élan* alone. Leaders also must have detailed plans. They must steer projects along the course, measure performance, raise funds, and take corrective action. Many conventional management practices are certainly useful. Yet there is an even more demanding leadership task if a person is to direct the course of action. The leader must model the way.

Quick Glance

Readings on Mission, Vision, and Leadership

To help gain a greater sense of the enabling power of mission, vision, leadership, and organizational change, consider reading the following:

- Albrecht , Karl: *The Northbound Train: Finding the Purpose, Setting the Direction, Shaping the Destiny of Your Organizations*
- Bryson, John: *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*
- Clemens, John K., and Mayer, Douglas F.: *The Classic Touch: Lessons in Leadership from Homer to Hemingway*
- Dalziel, Murray M., and Schoonover, Stephen C.: *Changing Ways: A Practical Tool for Implementing Change Within Organizations*
- Kouzes, James M., and Posner, Barry: *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* and *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*
- Keller, George: *Academic Strategy*
- Naisbitt, John: *Reinventing the Corporation*
- Peters, Tom: *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*
- Safire, William, and Safir, Leonard: *Leadership*

Kouzes and Posner go on to say that leaders *inspire a shared vision.* They breathe life into others' hopes and dreams and enable them to see the exciting possibilities the future holds. Leaders get others to buy into their dreams by showing how all will be served by a common purpose.

In some ways, leaders live their lives backwards. They envision results even before they have started their projects, much as an architect draws a blueprint or an engineer builds a model. Their clear image of the future pulls them forward. But visions seen only by leaders are insufficient to create significant change or an organized movement. A person with no followers is not a leader, and people will not become followers until they accept a vision as their own. You cannot command commitment; you can only inspire it.

A vision with heart

According to Kouzes and Posner, there is one other aspect of leadership and vision—the encouragement that leaders give themselves. One leader, when asked why he worked so hard, said, "I love to turn the key in the door and put on the coffeepot." Not only must leaders encourage the hearts of their followers; they must take time and care to encourage their own hearts as well.

3

A New Perspective on Marketing

> **"I keep marketing for the same reason that the pilot of an airplane keeps his engines running once he is off the ground."**
>
> —William Wrigley, Jr., when asked why he kept marketing his chewing gum even though it was already the most popular in the world

An expanded definition of marketing

A successful marketing effort often begins with a redefinition of marketing. All too often, colleges and universities focus almost exclusively on the promotional aspect of marketing, and it is this limited definition that is usually at the root of both their distrust of the process and their underestimation of its potential benefits. In the minds of administrators, staff, and faculty, a promotion-only definition of marketing leads only to gimmickry and hyperbole. Marketing at this level is often distilled to the notion of buying a bigger billboard or creating slick publications.

A proper definition of marketing is more dynamic, contemplative, balanced, and inclusive. Philip Kotler defines marketing as:

> **The analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programs designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of values with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives.**

Although this definition may at first appear cumbersome, it is actually quite elegant. Let's take a few minutes to dissect this definition.

Analysis and planning. Successful marketing efforts are based on a careful,

research-based appraisal of an institution's internal and external environment. Not whim, not rose-colored glasses, but careful, thoughtful, and ongoing research.

Implementation and control of carefully formulated programs. The carefully formulated programs are the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion. The four Ps are the heart of marketing. While most administrators are comfortable with the notion of marketing as promotion, they often overlook the role product, price, and place can play in an institution's marketing effort.

Voluntary exchange of values. The primary goal of marketing is to help the institution establish exchange relationships with key publics. Donors and students and alumni must be willing to exchange their values (dollars and time) for values offered by the institution (quality, reputation, prestige, outcomes, earning potential, etc.). Ideally, as an institution's marketing efforts succeed, target audiences will actually seek out this exchange relationship, and the institution will spend less time and money persuading people to trade values. Stanford University, for instance, spends less time than it used to at recruiting students; many more students seek out Stanford than can possibly attend. Students interested in attending actively seek to exchange their values—dollars, time, and commitment—with the values of a Stanford education—quality and opportunity.

Target audiences. Marketing efforts are most often directed at changing the behavior of people—in this case students, community residents, donors, or any group of individuals on whom the institution depends or with whom it must interact.

Achieve organizational objectives. Though colleges and universities have diverse organizational objectives, all institutions depend on resources, primarily dollars, to sustain quality and diversity. Every institution must direct sufficient marketing efforts to facilitating the flow of tuition, tax, and donated dollars into the institution.

The four Ps

As stated earlier, the four Ps represent the four variables that institutions manipulate as part of their marketing and positioning strategy. Sometimes the four Ps are called the marketing mix. This definition is helpful because it reminds us that the four Ps are the ingredients we mix to develop specific messages for specific target audiences.

Product

The first P is product. Not surprisingly, there is great confusion about what an institution's product is. Some believe a college or university's product is what is taught in the classroom. Others believe it is students. Still others think a product is what a student does with her or his degree. Although all of these definitions capture a dimension of product, especially from a recruiting perspective, they also limit the impact that product has in marketing. For our purposes, we will define a college or university's product as:

The sum of an institution's academic, social, physical, and values/spiritual

dimensions and the opportunities that are available to graduates.

This can get complicated in a hurry, so we should spend a little time here. Ultimately, there are two ways in which to view product mix: first, how the institution decides to mix different aspects of its academic, social, physical, and values/spiritual dimensions, and second, how external target audiences perceive and value this mix.

Mixing the product

One of the most wonderful aspects of American higher education is the tremendous

Quick Glance

From the FOUR Ps to the FOUR Cs and Beyond

Any discussion of the four Ps is extraordinarily useful, especially as colleges and universities seek to expand their understanding of marketing from promotion to the other three Ps: product, price, and place. However, it is important to note that even as an understanding of the four Ps evolves, so do the four Ps themselves.

Historically, the four Ps are written from a top-down perspective. In other words, the organization, in this case a college or university, "knows" what's best for students (product), charges what it wishes or needs to (price), and offers its product largely where it wishes (place). In fact, the only real customization, and it is limited, occurs with promotion. We occasionally segment or customize messages or appeals to different kinds of students or donors.

Nearly 10 years ago, the traditional downward approach of the four Ps was challenged with the creation of the four Cs by Don Schultz and Bob Lauterborn. Instead of product, Schultz and Lauterborn offer us consumer. Instead of price, we have cost. Instead of place, we have convenience. And instead of promotion, we have communication.

Where the four Ps have a top-down orientation, the four Cs focus on the needs of the customer or, in this case, on the consumer. An understanding of the four Cs is extremely helpful because this orientation stresses a dynamic marketplace and a strong interest in meeting customer needs. With a four-Cs approach, there is more likely to be real segmentation of product, price, place, and, of course, promotion.

But things keep changing. We have seen a flurry of other books on marketing that address the influence of the customer. Don Schultz, Stanley Tannenbaum, and Robert Lauterborn's *Integrated Marketing Communications: The New Marketing Paradigm* in 1993 emphasized integrated marketing communication—the need to customize message strategies for each customer or at least each major segment. There is Terry Vavra's *Aftermarketing*, which stresses long-term relationships to customers (not simply potential customers). Regis McKenna's *Relationship Marketing*, and Edward Nash's *Database Marketing: The Ultimate Marketing Tool*, and Edward Burnett's *Database Marketing: The New Profit Frontier* take varied approaches to the same goal: knowing the customer.

It is not surprising, then, that Don Peppers and Martha Rogers have taken things to their logical extreme. With their publication of *Enterprise One to One: Tools for Competing in the Interactive Age*, they make the case that successful organizations must customize their products to reflect the needs of each customer and that an understanding of their needs is based not on predicted data but on data that describe actual behavior.

Integrated marketing communication, relationship marketing, and one-to-one marketing have two significant attributes. First, they all stress aggressive listening. And second, they stress not just a willingness but a desire to customize.

Are colleges and universities ever likely to develop one-to-one relationships? It's doubtful. But even if they fall short, any movement toward a customer orientation built on aggressive listening and product customization will likely pay tremendous benefits.

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diversity of product mix. For example, MIT has a different product mix than Yakima Valley Community College, and Eastern Oklahoma State College certainly has a different product mix than Bethel College in Minnesota or Widener University in Philadelphia. Students and donors both understand that these five institutions are quite dissimilar. They are dissimilar, in part, by how they have chosen to emphasize different aspects of their product.

How an institution chooses to mix its product should depend on its founding mission and how the president interprets that mission and articulates it through her or his vision. However, the product mix should also recognize and even anticipate market realities. An institution may have a product mix that has served it well for 100 years. But changes in the numbers, composition, or interests of students or donors may require that it reexamine the mix.

Colleges and universities are often in a dilemma at this point. Some institutions, responding to each trend in the marketplace, appear to change their product mix at the drop of a hat. Others ignore significant changes in their marketplace and persist with a product mix that is antiquated and unappealing. Smart colleges and universities must find a balance between these two extremes.

Table 3-1.
Possible Product-mix Emphases at One Institution

Target Audience	Product-mix Emphases
Prospective students	Strong emphasis on academics and social life
Parents	Strong emphasis on academics, less emphasis on social life
Alumni donors	Less emphasis on academics and stronger emphasis on social life and athletics
Major donors	Stronger emphasis on academics

How target audiences perceive and value the mix

Different audiences often expect a product with different emphases: Students are often interested in different aspects of an institution than their parents are, and alumni donors are often interested in different aspects than major donors are. Table 3-1 is an oversimplification of how one college might mix aspects of its product.

Of course, the key to creating an effective product mix is to conduct research to determine audiences' expectations, then mix the product within the range of possibilities established by your mission and vision.

A missed opportunity

One of the most important dimensions of your product mix, especially for student recruiting, is your curriculum. Many colleges and universities fail to use their curriculum to differentiate themselves from the competition. From the perspective of students and donors alike, too many offer the same programs in the same ways. Business and industry use a matrix—called the product life cycle—to describe the logical outcome of too many businesses trying to sell the same product in the same marketplace. The product life cycle describes an important yet often overlooked phenomenon: As more and more companies offer the same product to the same market, the amount of money that businesses can charge customers for that product will drop.

Colleges and universities are facing what might be termed a curriculum life cycle—too many schools offering the exact same courses and programs as their competition and teaching these courses and programs in the exact same way.

As you can see from Table 3-2, as more campuses offer the same programs and courses, students will begin to make decisions on the basis of cost. This is particularly

true of undergraduate students and somewhat less true of graduate students.

If you examine your curriculum, you are likely to find that most of your programs and courses are at either market maturity or sales decline. Very few colleges and universities offer a meaningful number of Stage One or Stage Two programs or courses.

Consider the following example In the mid- to late 1970s, a very small number of institutions began offering computer science programs. These Stage One programs attracted a great deal of attention. Both students and donors were interested. Through the 1980s, as more and more institutions began offering computer science, the market continued to grow and then mature. Finally, the market has begun to decline.

It is very important to consider carefully how you can use your curriculum to differentiate yourself from your competition in meaningful ways. You must offer courses and programs that no one else in your marketplace is offering. Or you must offer similar courses and programs in ways that students and donors will find attractive. As your curriculum matures, you must always be scanning the marketplace to anticipate new curriculum trends—not fads, but meaningful responses to how your marketplace is changing.

Questions you should ask related to product:

- What is our product?
- How can we more effectively mix our academic, social, physical, and spiritual products?
- What aspects of our product most interest donors, alumni, and community residents?
- How does our product compare with those at competing institutions?
- Is/are our product/programs in demand? How do we know?
- Will students and donors overcome real and imagined barriers to take advantage of our product?
- What are the demonstrated outcomes of our product?

Table 3-2
Curriculum Life Cycle

Stage 1
Market Introduction
Pioneer program with no competition—price is not an issue

Stage 2
Market Growth
One or more colleges in a market offer the same program—price is becoming an issue

Stage 3
Market Maturity
Many competing colleges in a market offer the same program—students are more likely to differentiate programs by price

Stage 4
Sales Decline
Students cannot differentiate programs and choose the less expensive

Price

The second P is price. Traditionally, colleges and universities have focused on only one aspect of price: the cost in dollars to attend and a derivative of cost, financial aid. However, price plays a much larger role in marketing than most realize because a true definition of price includes both dollars and nondollar costs.

Let's examine these important concepts for a moment.

Student recruiting and price

First, let's look at student recruiting. Students are very interested in the bottom-line cost in dollars. However, students must also struggle with sometimes significant nondollar costs. For example, suppose the institution is in an unattractive area; students will perceive this as a cost. Or perhaps, from students' perspective, it is too large, too small, too Catholic, or not Catholic enough. These and dozens of other variables may also be calculated as costs—nondollar costs, but costs nonetheless.

There is a curious relationship between nondollar costs and product mix. If a student is not satisfied with some aspect of your product, that dissatisfaction is translated into a nondollar cost. For example, while the quality of the faculty is a primary component of academic product, if students feel that faculty are unavailable to them as first-year students, students will translate that product into a nondollar cost.

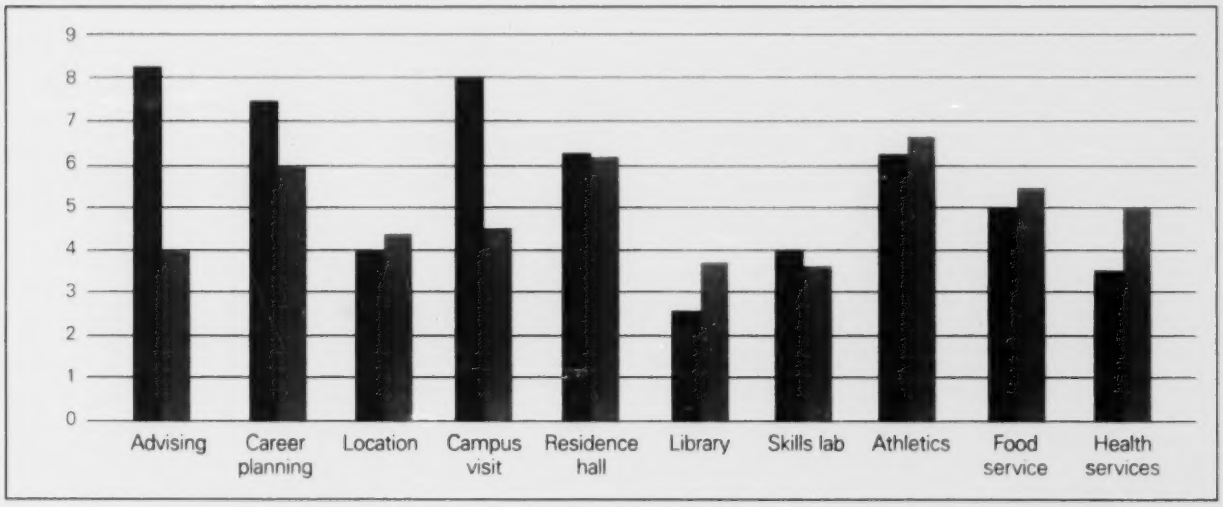
Interestingly, the cumulative impact of these nondollar costs often has a greater impact on the final decision of where to attend college than do dollar costs. Dollar costs may help establish the cohort of potential colleges, but calculation of nondollar costs often helps students decide which they will attend.

It's crucial to address nondollar costs in a systematic way. Though most institutions can do little to change the cost to attend without sinking significant dollars into financial aid, they can often do much to manage nondollar costs. Consider the graph in Figure 3-1, which represents data from a survey of prospective students. The graph, using a gap-analysis format, actually depicts paired data sets for each variable. The bar on the left for each data set indicates, on a scale of one to nine, how much students value a certain characteristic or variable. The paired bar on the right is students' evaluation of how well they feel the college does on that variable. Look, for example, at the paired bars for advising. Students rate the importance of advising very highly (about 8.2 out of nine). However, they feel that the college, overall, does not offer a great advising program (rating it only 4.1 out of nine). The size of this gap indicates an opportunity for the college to address a nondollar cost.

Fund raising and price

Donors often have a different perspective on price than do students and parents. From the donor's perspective, price issues are more often nondollar than dollar. Donors, for example, want to know that the college is well-managed, that it is true to its founding mission, and that the president has an articulated vision. In other words,

Figure 3-1.
Students' Ratings of College Characteristics
Source: Stamats Communications, Inc



donors want to ally themselves with institutions that are moving ahead.

Questions you should ask related to price:

- How much do we charge for our product?
- How does this cost compare with competing institutions'?
- How effective is our financial aid program?
- What nondollar costs are associated with our product?
- What strategies have we implemented to determine, evaluate, and negate nondollar costs?
- What nondollar costs most concern alumni and donors?

Balance the scale

Before we continue our discussion of the remaining four Ps, we need to examine a subtle but important aspect of price—value. Whenever we consider the cost of something, we also calculate, perhaps subconsciously, what we will get in return. We want to make sure we are getting a good deal for our money or time. We call this good deal "value"—the relationship between the cost of something and the benefits we will receive.

It is very important that we completely understand the relationship between costs and benefits. Let's look at how this relationship affects how we make decisions. People, including students, add up the perceived dollar and nondollar costs of doing something, then add up the perceived benefits. If the costs outweigh the benefits, we don't do it, because we are not getting a good deal. But if the benefits outweigh the costs, we do it, because we are getting a good deal. When students say, "You cost too much," what they are really saying is that you are not worth the cost—the value isn't there—they do not perceive enough benefits for the costs they must incur.

Donors also understand the relationship between costs and benefits. When they decide not to donate, it is seldom over a dollar-cost concern. More likely they are concerned about nondollar issues: about being identified with a particular campaign or institution, about a drain on their time, or about being inconvenienced. However, if the benefit of donating is significantly large, the cost/benefit scale will swing in favor of a donation; prospective donors will find value in their relationship with the institution.

Smart institutions understand the relationship between costs and benefits. Research is conducted with each major target audience to discover how it perceives the costs and benefits of its relationship with the institution. Benefits are created and promoted, while costs are addressed and, if possible, negated. The sense of value is heightened to facilitate the exchange relationship.

Place

Of the four Ps, place is often the most underused. Historically, place has been bound to geography—the physical spot where a college or university does what it does. Of late, however, place has been expanded to include time, or when a college or university does what it does.

Quick Glance

Financial aid information

While most institutions cannot significantly increase the amount of aid or discount tuition, they can often improve the quality and timeliness of the information about financial aid, and they can certainly improve the level of service in the financial aid office. This will often have as much or more effect on financial aid than just increasing the amount of money that is available.

Place has also been affected greatly by multimedia, distance learning, cable TV, and other electronic wonders that allow institutions to shift place and time. "Over the next few years, as more and more colleges and universities develop viable links to the emerging information highway, place may become a moot point," says Robert Smith at the University of Tennessee, Martin. "The handful of institutions that currently offer courses and degrees via electronic media will explode rapidly, and the day will quickly arise that any student anywhere may tap into the information highway and obtain a degree from virtually any college or university in the country."

Target audiences will position place as one of the following:

- A positive attribute of the institution
- A negative attribute
- A neutral attribute

If your target audiences perceive your place as prestigious, rich in resources, or fun, this positive view can be a powerful part of your marketing mix. You can use place to offset other parts of your marketing mix that target audiences find less attractive. For example, suppose your facilities are not terrific. You might help balance this weakness by emphasizing your great location.

However, if your place is rightly viewed as inconvenient, distant, or unsafe, the overall impact of place is negative and you need to emphasize the other Ps instead: price, product, and promotion.

Finally, if target audiences are ambivalent about place, you must emphasize those aspects of place that are beneficial while balancing the less beneficial aspects by emphasizing other attributes of your institution.

The best way to evaluate your place is to ask target audiences the effect place played in decisions they made. You may discover, for instance, that rather than assembling on your main campus, students are more willing to attend classes at other sites. Donors, rather than traveling to an out-of-the-way college in west Texas, will gladly attend receptions you sponsor in Dallas or Fort Worth.

It is possible to change how your target audiences view your place. I remember a publication from a consortium of colleges and universities in northern Ohio that sought to position their place, Cleveland, as a great benefit. "Some colleges have pretty ponds," the copy exclaimed, "while we have a great lake." The piece then went on to discuss the many resources available in Cleveland including world-class internships, entertainment, and cultural opportunities.

Questions you should ask related to place:

- Where are our programs and events offered?
- Are people willing to take classes and attend events in those places?
- Do people find these places inviting, attractive, convenient, and safe?
- What segments of our target market perceive our location as positive; what segments perceive it as negative?
- What other places might serve us better?
- What alternative, electronic-based delivery modes are available?

- Are our programs offered at a time that students, donors, and other target audiences find attractive?
- Does this place or time compete with other potential conflicts (job, family obligations, traffic patterns)?

Promotion

The final P is promotion. In many respects, promotion involves marketing the other three Ps through such avenues as advertising, publications, direct mail, personal contact, and environmentals. In other words, promotion involves bringing a mix of your product, price, and place attributes to the attention of your target audiences.

It is this final P, promotion, that usually causes colleges and universities the most grief. Many faculty, staff, and administrators believe that being good at something is all it takes to flourish in today's marketplace. These people often believe that marketing and promotion are unethical on one hand and superficial on the other.

A promotion-only definition of marketing is the cause of this problem. A true marketing effort involves creating a product that is valued, at a price that people will pay, in a place to which people will come. But the fourth ingredient, promotion, is the catalyst. Your product, price, and place must be brought to people's attention through promotion.

Colleges and universities that seek to develop a strong promotion plan have a breathtaking array of options at their disposal. Even a small list would include such strategies as those in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3.
Promotion Options

Word of mouth
Telemarketing
Signage and environmentals
Magazine advertising
Newspaper advertising
TV/cable advertising
Radio advertising
Transit/outdoor advertising
Multimedia (audio, video, floppies, CDs, Internet)
PSAs
Special events
Direct mail

To help focus your media strategies, it is useful to ask target audiences which general and specific media they are most likely to respond to. For example, alumni may favor direct mail while major donors may want a special event or telephone call from the president. A media-habits survey can reveal not only that prospective students listen to radio but which radio format they listen to most often.

Questions you should ask relating to promotion:

- To what media (TV, radio, advertising, direct mail) are our audiences most likely to respond?
- What media are available in our target regions?
- How do our promotional activities compare to those used by our competition?
- What media can give us an edge?

Other Ps

The traditional definition of marketing focuses on price, product, place, and promotion. It is upon these that most marketing strategies are built. Of late, however, there has been much discussion about enlarging the four Ps to include three more concepts: policy, people, and performance.

Marketing as policy

You can evaluate the policy dimension by asking a simple question: Does this institu-

tion's policy-making body embrace marketing? Does it evaluate the marketing implications of policy decisions before making them? Is it willing to address or readdress policies that hinder marketing?

Marketing cannot thrive at institutions that do not understand how policy affects marketing. If the president wants to meet the needs of current students but refuses to allocate money to keep the financial aid office open during lunch hour, then marketing has failed at the policy level.

If the president's five-year plan emphasizes an increased commitment to alumni but refuses to allocate time or money to organize alumni events, marketing has failed at the policy level.

If the president charges a marketing task force with creating a plan but refuses to fund it, marketing has failed at the policy level. The policy dimension of marketing is critical. It is here that marketing will most likely succeed or fail. It is here that marketing moves from an idea to practice. It is here that marketing is sustained.

Marketing as people

"Ultimately, the success of marketing relies on people."

The next P—people—reminds us that people define the marketing goals. People write the plan. People implement the plan. And people are the target of marketing strategies. Ultimately, the success of marketing relies on people.

People involved in marketing must be willing to be changed by the marketing process, to look at old things in new ways, to modify their actions, and to take responsibility for their efforts. In short, they must be committed to marketing.

This commitment will come neither easily nor quickly. A commitment cannot be mandated. Rather, it must be grown. A president once told me ruefully, "I don't worry about how my people do their jobs when I'm there. But I worry a lot about how they do their jobs when I am not."

Marketing as performance

The final P, marketing as performance, is an extension of marketing as people. Marketing as performance understands that the performance of people is what lifts marketing from plan to reality. People's commitment must be evident in their performance.

Barriers to marketing

Of course, the question must be asked: If the potential for marketing is so enormous, why do so few colleges and universities embrace it? This is a question I often ask at professional meetings and when I visit campuses. More often than not, the lament I hear follows this theme: "We don't have enough money."

In my experience, however, a lack of money is almost never the chief impediment to the creation and implementation of a comprehensive marketing strategy. Rather, the money issue usually masks other, often more entrenched, barriers. When I probe, I generally find one or more of the following systemic obstacles to marketing:

- Prime motivators are missing. If stakeholders do not feel threatened, or if the

institution does not need the resources offered by emerging opportunities, it is unlikely that there will be enough consensus for marketing.

- No top-down commitment to marketing. If the president doesn't aggressively support marketing, it will fail.
- An ill-conceived belief that strategic problems can be solved tactically. All the direct mail in the world won't save a flawed, dated, or moribund curriculum.
- An unwillingness to address issues of territoriality. Comprehensive marketing efforts are just that—comprehensive. If the chief academic, advancement, student services, and enrollment officers are not willing to share goals and resources, then the marketing effort will be seriously impaired.
- A reluctance to undertake a realistic situational analysis. Marketing decisions must be founded on reliable information. A legitimate environmental audit, assessment of educational need, institutional self-study, and perception and positioning studies must be undertaken.
- An inconsistent definition of marketing among senior administrators, plan developers, or other stakeholders. From the outset, planners and the campus community must use a common definition of marketing.
- A confusion between stakeholders and customers. Stakeholders—faculty, staff, administrators, and others—are people who work for and support the institution. Customers are the people who pay the bills (donors actually have their feet in both camps). It is the job of the organization to serve its customers, and by meeting customer needs, it will gather resources that will support the needs of the stakeholders as well. However, if the institution is preoccupied with keeping stakeholders happy, it is likely that the needs and interests of the customer will be either ignored or shortchanged.
- A fixation with historical paradigms. Colleges and universities exist in a society that is changing at a mind-boggling pace. As a consequence, institutions will find that traditions, self-perceptions, and historical patterns and ways of doing things are increasingly out of date, ill-suited, or overly costly. Consider the breadth of answers that the following questions might foster:
  - How do we define institutional success?
  - What is academic quality?
  - What students should we serve?
  - How do we define student success?

If your institution has not recently sought the answers to these questions, chances are it is out of touch with today's marketplace.

When I think about paradigm shifts and organizations and institutional resistance to change, I am reminded of the formula outlined below:

Number of years in current system x Age = Resistance to Change

In many respects, the people with the greatest stake in the status quo—senior administrators and faculty—are the same people who are in the best position to effect change. At the same time, the people most interested in change are often new entrants

into the system and lack experience, power, or both. As a result, the potential for conflictual relationships will increase.

Characteristics of a market-oriented institution

While it is useful to spend some time describing institutional barriers to marketing, it is also important to outline the characteristics of a market-oriented institution, an institution that has the best opportunity to meet the challenges of an increasingly tempestuous marketing environment. The characteristics of these institutions include these:

- Embracing a comprehensive definition of marketing
- Recognizing marketplace dynamics
- A belief in the constancy of change
- Transforming vision
- Primacy of the customer
- Clarification of stakeholder roles
- Redefinition of quality and success
- A culture of "now!"
- Data-based decision-making
- Variation of product, price, place, and promotion
- Clear criteria for evaluating progress

Embracing a comprehensive definition of marketing

At the outset, market-oriented institutions embrace a comprehensive definition of marketing that clearly sets them apart from their peers. Rather than stressing only promotion, market-oriented institutions understand the need to develop strategic responses (produce, price, and place) to audience and marketplace needs and expectations and to communicate these strategic responses tactically, through aggressive promotion.

These few words address the fundamental difference between the growing handful of colleges and universities that are truly market-driven—that employ "integrated marketing" techniques—and the many that are not.

Recognizing marketplace dynamics

The second pivotal characteristic of a market-oriented institution is recognizing that the marketplace is dynamic, competitive, fluctuating, and, as one administrator reminded me, forgetful. We have learned from hard experience that the marketplace does not care about past successes. It does not care about traditions and accepted practices. It has its own definitions of academic quality. It does not guarantee you a certain share just because you exist. And perhaps most important for this discussion, the marketplace has too few students to fill the classrooms and too few donors to fill the coffers of today's colleges and universities.

This is the marketplace in which you must compete for students and donated dollars.

A belief in the constancy of change

Market-oriented institutions also understand that the only real constant in today's marketing environment is change and that in response to this changing environment, colleges and universities must be willing to change as well.

Change is difficult in any organization, but it is perhaps more so in higher education where tradition is so treasured. Recently, a colleague passed on a wonderful illustration that outlined the steps for managing change in complex systems (see Figure 3-2). That illustration noted that enabling change requires five key ingredients:

- Vision
- Skills
- Incentives
- Resources
- Action plans

Vision provides badly needed direction. Skills, both technical and human, are used to execute strategy. Incentives are designed to encourage and to soften discord. Resources pay for the execution of strategies. And action plans, a clear sense of who is doing what, are meant to provide accountability. These are the ingredients of change, and if one or more is missing, change either will not occur or will likely not be long-term.

Transforming vision

The next characteristic of a market-oriented institution, as noted in Chapter 2, is transforming vision.

Primacy of the customer

Market-oriented institutions understand the primacy of their customers. They know their demographic and psychographic profiles. They know their needs and expectations. They know where and how they live. They know their motivations, fears, and

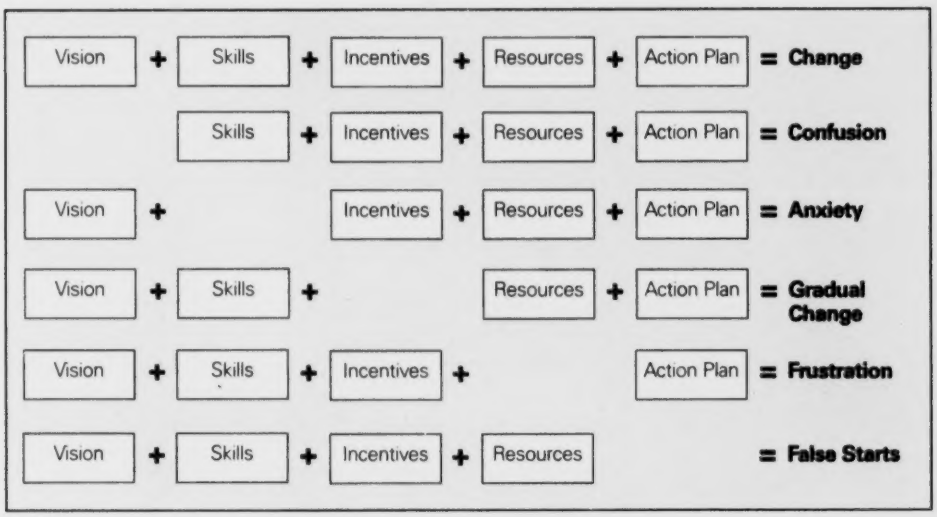

Vision + Skills + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = Change
Skills + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = Confusion
Vision + Incentives + Resources + Action Plan = Anxiety
Vision + Skills + Resources + Action Plan = Gradual Change
Vision + Skills + Incentives + Action Plan = Frustration
Vision + Skills + Incentives + Resources = False Starts

Figure 3-2
Managing Change
Source: *Unknown*

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concerns. And perhaps most important, they never, ever forget that it is the customers who pay the bills.

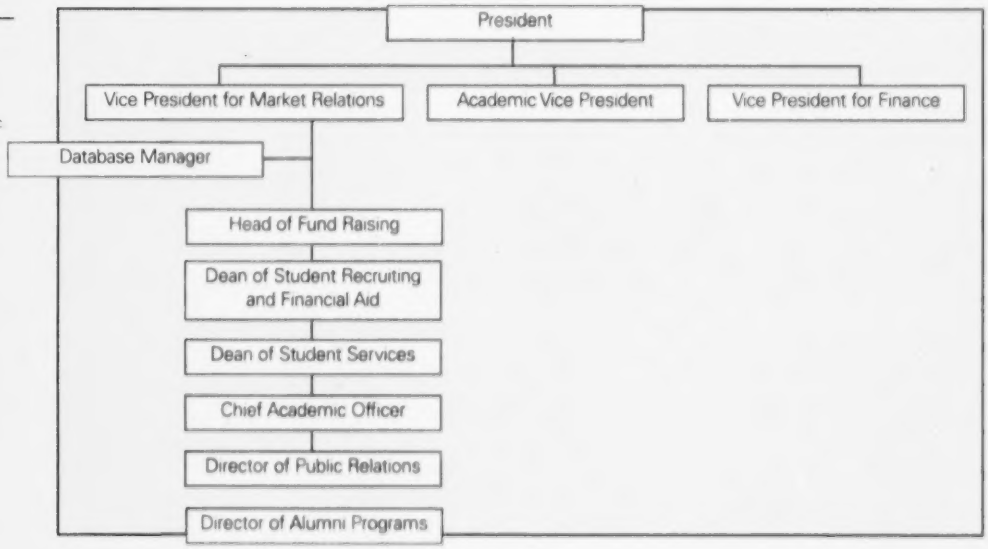
Understanding and accepting the primacy of the customer should affect organizational structure in a significant way. Regis McKenna, writing in *Relationship Marketing: Successful Strategies for the Age of the Customer*, presents the notion of a director or vice president of "market relations" rather than marketing. The application of this thinking to higher education might lead to an organizational structure that resembles the chart in Figure 3-3.

In this organizational model, one senior administrator, the vice president for market relations, oversees all customer relations regardless of the stage at which that customer relates to the institution. Clearly, this structure is pushing the organizational envelope.

Clarification of stakeholder roles

Market-oriented institutions fully understand the important contribution that stakeholders—faculty, staff, and other constituents—make to academic quality and the totality of the educational experience. They also understand, however, that although stakeholder voices should never be overlooked, theirs are not the only voices. Institutions should continue to acknowledge stakeholders' important role, but market-oriented institutions know that to focus on their needs at the expense of customers is to imperil the entire enterprise.

Figure 3-3.
The Market-Oriented Institution
Source: Stamats Communications, Inc.



Redefinition of quality and success

Often in my role as a consultant I ask administrators and faculty to define institutional quality and success. When I began asking this question 10 years ago, quality and success centered on students—helping them achieve academically, socially, and even

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spiritually. Over the past couple of years, however, definitions of quality and success have begun to emphasize financial stability (cash flow, endowment, fund raising, new sources of revenue) and building programs (I often jokingly term this preoccupation with facilities the "edifice complex"). Somehow, students are being squeezed out.

Market-oriented institutions need to rediscover, or perhaps just emphasize anew, student-centered definitions of quality and success. Though accounting ledgers should balance, facilities should shine, and endowments should grow, it must be recognized that these are all means to a larger end of educating and enriching students. They are not ends unto themselves.

A culture of "now!"

Colleges and universities need a keen sense of now. They need to understand that opportunities are fleeting. They need to deliberate more quickly. And they need to act decisively. They need to develop a culture of "now!"

I believe that a culture of "now!" has seven characteristics. First, there is an empowering sense of entrepreneurship. Causes and ideas are encouraged. People are on teams rather than committees. Champions step forward. Leaders have followers. Things happen—some great, some not so great, and many unexpected.

Second, risk-taking is encouraged. It is a commitment to the status quo, not failure, that is discouraged. Third, there is an attitude of immediacy. Deliberation and debate are still valued, but undue deliberation and debate are not. Talk, but talk quickly.

"Market-oriented institutions understand that their future does not lie along a straight path."

Fourth, institutions with a culture of "now!" understand that they cannot afford perfect decisions. They realize that they have neither the time nor the money to assess and consider every contingency. The goal should not be perfect decisions but a string of pretty good decisions made in a timely fashion. Market-oriented institutions understand that their future does not lie along a straight path. Rather, their future is a series of zigs and zags—missteps and corrections toward a generalized goal.

Fifth, while consensus is valued when it occurs, it is not expected, and when it doesn't occur, the institution still moves forward. Institutions with a culture of "now!" recognize that there will be disagreements, even conflict. Some people and departments will have their horizons expanded, and others will find theirs eclipsed. Market-oriented institutions make no guarantees that individuals will be happy and secure. In fact, this is not a goal. Enhancing the institution's ability to meet the needs of its customers is.

Sixth, there is much more interest in fixing problems than in affixing blame. On too many campuses, blame slides downhill, with senior administrators blaming junior administrators and everyone blaming the faculty. Colleges and universities cannot afford this preoccupation with blame. Acknowledge your mistakes. Assess the mechanisms that failed. Make adjustments or corrections. And move on.

Finally, colleges and universities with a culture of "now!" have a strong sense of individual and group accountability. Accountability is a given.

Data-based decision-making

The next characteristic of a market-oriented institution is a data-based approach to decision-making. Solid, defensible data will be aggressively sought, considered for a prescribed time, and acted on. Peppers and Rogers in *Enterprise One to One: Tools for Competing in the Interactive Age* introduce a wonderful term: the learning relationship. The learning relationship describes an intimate interaction between the organization and its customers. It is a relationship built on trust, on aggressive listening by the organization, and on two-way communication (not merely promotion). At all times, this relationship recognizes and meets the self-interests of both parties--the organization and the customer.

Interestingly, the desire for a learning relationship presents us with an odd conundrum. For organizations to be highly personal, they must rely on impersonal data, a perfect record of all interactions between the organization and the customer. Generally, the ability to create and maintain perfect records is not a technology issue or even a cost issue but more an issue of institutional will and intent. Making data-based decisions may hinder the freewheeling or recalcitrant style of some administrators or faculty.

Even as we develop and refine our data collection and data-based decision-making abilities, we would do well to remember the Laws of Data Dynamics. While data are important, and more data are generally more insightful than fewer data, there are some basic cautions to keep in mind. See Table 3-4.

Table 3-4.
Laws of Data Dynamics

- People misinterpret.
- Data are seldom as accurate as people say.
- Data age quickly.
- Data will always be used for purposes other than that for which they were originally gathered.
- Data collected about individuals will be used to cause inconvenience to members of the group that provided the information or about which it was collected.
- Confidential information is confidential only until someone decides it's not.
- Data migrate.

Modified from Larson's *The Naked Consumer*

Variation of product, price, place, and promotion

Market-oriented institutions do not treat all customers to the same product, price, place, and promotion. There is a willingness to customize and segment. There is a willingness to modify and test. And there is a willingness to treat some customers differently than others on the basis of their ability to return value—dollars, ability, or some quality or characteristic that the institution desires.

In some respects, the willingness of the institution to customize product, price, place, and promotion strategies is a logical extension of two key issues: its desire to embrace a more comprehensive definition of marketing and its willingness to act on data.

Clear criteria for evaluating progress

Clear criteria are the final characteristic of a market-oriented institution. Ideally, these criteria are established *a priori* rather than *ex post facto*. Perhaps the greatest difference between business and education is the historic reluctance of colleges and universities to evaluate systematically whether programs, strategies, activities, and plans make sense, whether they are effective, and whether they are contributing value. There is a feeling, a strong one, that business-based measures of success and progress simply have nothing to offer higher education. For market-oriented institutions, this is no longer true.

Recently I had an opportunity to speak to an administrator from a League of

Innovation community college. She noted that her institution sets clear goals before launching new programs. If a program does not meet these goals, it is cut or reconfigured. This must be the model for all of higher education in the future, just as it is the model for marketing.

4

> **"Data, data, data. I can't make bricks without clay."**
>
> —Sherlock Holmes

Market Research

A foundation built on research

Solid marketing plans rest on a foundation of research. In fact, any marketing plan that does not include research at its base is almost surely flawed. It either will fail or will take more time and money to execute. This reality is reflected in a basic definition of market research: the systematic design, collection, analysis, and reporting of data and findings relevant to a specific marketing situation an institution faces. In short, market research involves finding specific answers to specific questions—information that is used to refine marketing goals and to help develop the overall marketing plan.

Market research can help you in a variety of ways. First, you can use it to gather perceptual data. Because people act on their perceptions, learning how different audiences perceive and sometimes misperceive you is critical.

Second, you can use research to provide answers. A recent client was interested in knowing which of two academic programs would attract the most students. A survey of prospective students, an analysis of competing curricula, and an evaluation of short- and long-term regional job and employment trends provided the necessary data. Another client wanted to know which message strategies prospective donors might best respond to. A survey of donors quickly pinpointed some strategies the client had not previously considered.

Third, research helps you clarify and set priorities. In today's marketing, fund-

raising, and recruiting environment, the problem is generally not a lack of options but determining which ones are most likely to succeed or provide the greatest return in the shortest time. If you have $10,000 to buy advertising aimed at nontraditional students, you can use research to pinpoint the media to which they are most likely to respond.

Fourth, research allows you to test ideas. With research, you can evaluate publication concepts, logo ideas, even signage. Using research in this way can often prevent you from making expensive and very public mistakes.

And finally, research helps monitor your environment. It can quickly pinpoint problems while they are still manageable. At the same time, research can highlight opportunities that you might otherwise miss.

"Good research must do more than gather data."

Not data but information

It is not difficult to generate research data. Chances are you have volumes of data sitting on a shelf somewhere in your office. Rather than just data, successful research must generate information upon which you can act. In other words, it is not the collection of data that matters most but the interpretation and application of data.

Each year, college administrators send my company multivolumed studies done by nationally known research companies. Accompanying the studies is a question: "What did we learn—would you mind going over the numbers for us and letting us know what we found out?"

Good research, research that can be used to support a marketing plan, must do more than gather data. It must provide answers to real questions. It must provide clear direction. And it must set out options in priority order.

A necessary vocabulary

Like any specialized endeavor, market research has its own vocabulary. It is important to understand some key terms before we begin a more detailed discussion.

Primary research and secondary research

Essentially, there are two sources of research data: primary and secondary. Primary research uses data that originate with your specific study. Secondary research uses existing data from a completed study that may be applicable to yours.

Suppose, for example, you want to know why alumni give to your institution. If you conduct a survey to find out, you are engaged in primary research. On the other hand, if you use data from a study completed by a colleague at another institution, you are using secondary research.

The difference is important for several reasons. First, because primary research involves designing an original study, it is more expensive and time-consuming. Secondary research is usually less expensive or even free and is usually available quickly.

The second major difference involves the quality, suitability, and integrity of the

data. A well-designed primary research study should offer high-quality data. With secondary data, you are inferring conclusions from someone else's research, so you must take extra care to ascertain the data's relevance, examine the impartiality of the study's sponsor, and ensure that correct methodology was followed.

Quantitative research and qualitative research

Just as there are two broad sources of research, there are two broad types of research: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative research uses a statistically valid and randomly generated sample to represent a larger population. Validity is important because you want to project data obtained from a relatively small sample to the larger population. Quantitative research requires a carefully designed methodology. For this reason, it is usually fairly expensive and may take some time. Done correctly, mail surveys and telephone surveys are two forms of quantitative research.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is not statistically valid, and data cannot be projected to larger populations with any degree of certainty. Because qualitative research uses a much less strict methodology, it can usually be conducted more quickly and at lower cost. Focus groups and in-depth interviews are two forms of qualitative research.

Qualitative Research $\longleftrightarrow$ Quantitative Research

The key difference between quantitative and qualitative research is really how you wish to use the data. Qualitative research is descriptive, but it is not projectionable. In other words, you cannot project the findings from a focus group of six students to predict how other students might react to your new viewbook. However, with a well-done quantitative study, you can project the findings to a larger population with a high degree of reliability. If 73 percent of your sample responded a certain way to a question, you can be reasonably sure that 73 percent of the larger population would respond in the same manner.

Populations and samples

A population is the group of people to be studied. You may have a population of faculty, staff, donors, alumni, current students, prospective students, parents, or community residents.

A sample is a small subset of that population. In statistical or projectionable studies, the sample must be of a certain size, representative of the larger population, and randomly generated to be considered valid.

Sampling is important for three reasons. First, it is much less expensive to survey a sample of 370 than a population of 10,000. Second, correctly drawn samples are highly representative. And third, it takes less time to survey a sample than an entire population.

Quick Glance

Sources of Secondary Data

Sometimes secondary data can provide the insight and information you need. For sources of exceptional data, see Appendices A, B, and C.

Reliability

Reliability, often called confidence or validity, is usually expressed as a percentage. A study that is reliable at the 95 percent level has a range of error of five percent. If 68 percent of respondents say yes to a particular question, the assumption for the population as a whole could range from 63 percent (68 percent minus five percent) to 73 percent (68 percent plus five percent). The greater the reliability, the more valid the findings.

However, as in many things, there is a tradeoff. Although many factors affect reliability, one of the most important is sample size. The more reliability you want, the greater the sample must be. Table 4-1 illustrates this point.

Table 4-1
Reliability and Sample Size

Size of Population	Sample +/-1%	Size +/-2%	for +/-3%	Reliability +/-4%	+/-5%
1,000	**	**	**	375	278
2,000	**	**	696	462	322
3,000	**	1,334	787	500	341
→ 4,000	**	1,500	842	522	350 ✓
5,000	**	1,622	879	536	357
10,000	4,899	1,936	964	566	370
20,000	6,489	2,144	1,013	583	377
50,000	8,057	2,291	1,045	593	381
100,000	8,763	2,345	1,056	597	383
500,000	9,423	2,390	1,065	600	384

For example, suppose you have a population of 4,000 alumni (see arrow in left column of Table 4-1). If you want 95 percent reliability, you must survey 350 of them (see ✓ in right column of Table 4-1). A confidence level of 95 percent is very good. Note, however, how much larger the sample would be if you wanted a confidence level of 98 percent. Instead of 350 alumni in your sample, you would need 1,500.

As you can see, moving from 95 percent to 98 percent means sampling four times as many alumni. Of course, this will have a tremendous impact on the cost of the research. Clients often begin projects with the hope of achieving 99 percent reliability. However, 95 percent is really a much better goal. This level is a good balance between cost and validity.

Types of research

Focus groups

Focus groups are designed to focus discussions around a specific topic so people's attitudes, perceptions, and language can be captured and analyzed. This makes focus groups ideal for exploring opinions and attitudes held by students, donors, parents, and others.

Typically, focus groups involve 10 to 12 people, are about 60 minutes in length, and are directed by a moderator. Respondents are selected and screened so they are relatively homogeneous, thereby minimizing both conflicts among group members on issues not relevant to the study and wide-ranging differences in perceptions, experiences, and verbal skills. During the discussion, the moderator follows a guide, a preestablished list of questions and topics to address during the session. Sessions are usually audiotaped. The tape transcriptions and the moderator's notes are the raw data to be analyzed and presented in the final report.

Mail surveys

Mail surveys are widely used in research for examining dispersed populations such as

Quick Glance

Focus Group Guidelines

To make your focus groups as successful as possible, consider the following suggestions:

Length: About 60 minutes per session. Can usually be adjusted so a session will fit during a dinner or a class period.

Number of participants: Ten to 12 per session. It is extremely difficult to control the discussion with more than 12, and the quality of the data will suffer.

Screening participants: Where possible, screen participants so they are as similar/homogeneous as possible. The participants should closely match the profile of the target audience.

Location: Almost any room will do as long as it is comfortable. Because the sessions are usually recorded, the room should be fairly quiet. Ideally, chairs and tables should be movable.

In-depth examination of a single publication: If participants will examine one publication in depth, they should receive a copy ahead of time so they can examine it before the session begins. Remember, it takes time to scrutinize a publication, so you will usually have time for only one or two during the session.

Mounting publication samples: If you are interested in comparing the covers of different publications (for example, you want to compare your viewbook cover with those of your competition), mount each one securely on identical, numbered mat boards.

Displaying publications: If you want to compare covers, have enough tables or easels so all are easily seen at the same time.

Refreshments: When available, it is appropriate to serve soda or coffee. However, avoid messy finger foods such as pizza at sessions where people will handle publications.

alumni, community residents, or—if you use campus mail—students or faculty. As you write and pretest the survey instrument, draw a representative sample of the population, or audience, to be investigated. In some cases, a presurvey postcard should notify your sample that it will be part of an important research project. The survey goes out with a cover letter that explains the need for research. Depending on the audience, these surveys may include some sort of incentive to increase response.

After a short period, you may send a follow-up letter to people who have not returned the survey. This, too, helps increase response. As the surveys come in, you or your researcher will review them for completeness and validity. The actual analysis involves frequency counts (percentages) of how each question was answered and cross-tabulations (comparisons of how different groups answered the same question). In some cases more sophisticated statistical analyses may be applied.

Telephone surveys

Telephone surveys are actually a combination of in-depth interviews and mail surveys. Their methodology is largely similar to that of mail surveys, except the interview is conducted over the phone. Because the interviewer reads all the questions, telephone surveys tend to be less sophisticated and shorter than mail surveys.

Table 4-2.
Strengths and Weaknesses of Types of Market Research

Type of Research	Strengths	Weaknesses	Best Use
Focus groups	1. Informal 2. Often uncover ideas never anticipated by researcher 3. Great for capturing anecdotal data useful for illustration, for comparisons, or to gather insight before developing a quantitative research instrument 4. Often spontaneous	1. Require an experienced moderator 2. Group dynamics can be problematic 3. Can turn into gripe sessions 4. Heavily anecdotal and nonquantitative 5 Often difficult to arrange 6. Relatively expensive for the quality of data obtained	1. Early in the research process to provide initial direction 2. For testing concepts, especially visuals 3. For testing and comparing messages and media from competing institutions
Mail surveys	1 Relatively inexpensive if an adequate sample can be obtained 2. Can be longer 3. Can ask complex or sensitive questions 4. Can show/use illustrations and graphics 5. No geographic limitations	1. Take longer to complete 2. Less control over response rate 3. Can be perceived as impersonal 4. Less control over timing 5. Depend heavily on quality of mailing list 6. May require an incentive	1. For audiences that have a great affinity for you (alumni, parents) so are more likely to respond 2. To gather comprehensive data 3. To survey audiences that are dispersed geographically
Telephone surveys	1. Much more control over response rates 2. Can be completed quickly 3. Some respondents prefer anonymity 4. Can be highly representative	1. Must be shorter and less complex 2. Difficult to establish initial rapport 2. Sometimes difficult to gather sensitive or personal data 3. Relatively expensive 4. Cannot show/use illustrations and graphics 5. Telephone numbers of respondents may not be available	1. Audiences that may not respond to a mail survey 2. When surveys are short 3. When you need a great deal of data in a short time
In-depth interviews	1. Can probe and follow lead of respondent 2. Good for highly political audiences 3. Doesn't always strike respondent as "research" 4. Often used to both gather data and build bridges with the audience 5. Difficult to be representative	1. Very expensive 2. Depends heavily on skill of interviewer 3. More potential for interviewer bias 4. Can take a great deal of time 5. Difficult to input; data often subject to multiple interpretations	1. Best for high-profile audiences not available through other means 2. When validity is not a big issue or when population is very small

In-depth interviews

Lasting 30 to 45 minutes, in-depth, or one-on-one, interviews are designed to elicit information and opinions from people who are unable or unwilling to be approached through other research techniques. Like other forms of research, in-depth interviews follow an interview guide, a series of questions that serve to direct the discussion. Most in-depth interviews are conversational in nature.

See Table 4-2 for a breakdown of strengths and weaknesses of the various types of market research.

Understanding the importance of trend data

Though any research project can provide important information, at best it is a snapshot that gathers data on how people think at a specific time. This is useful, but it is often much more useful to know how those data have changed over time. Suppose your research revealed that 23.5 percent of alumni do not read any portion of your quarterly magazine. Many people would find this distressing. However, you know that two years ago this number was 31.4 percent. Rather than being distressed, you are elated because you are making progress. Trend data provide an important perspective: Rather than a snapshot, they are an ongoing movie.

To collect trend data, you must routinely survey the same audience and ask that audience the same question. These steps are the only way to make meaningful comparisons.

Designing a research study

Undertaking a research study involves completing seven distinct yet sequential steps:

1. Develop the research agenda.
2. Design the research methodology.
3. Write the research instrument.
4. Draw the sample.
5. Complete the study.
6. Input and analyze data.
7. Present the results.

Step 1: Develop the research agenda

The research agenda is a guide to action. It provides direction, clarifies options, and keeps things on track.

Developing a research agenda involves answering four questions: Why are you doing the research? What do you hope to learn? What audiences have the answers? And finally, what decisions will you make as a result?

It is important to know why you are undertaking research. Perhaps you are responding to changes in your institution or your marketplace. Perhaps you have a new president who needs to be acclimated or you just want to keep a finger on the

pulse of your environment. All of these are good reasons to conduct research.

At the beginning of your research project, it is important to clarify exactly what it is you wish to learn. We sometimes call this the "big question." Big questions might be these:

- Why do so few (or many) alumni give to the annual fund?
- Why don't former donors give again?
- How do parents perceive our institution?
- Why do some students withdraw?

The big question serves as a sort of thesis statement and helps direct the creation of the survey instrument. As you develop individual survey questions, keep the big question in mind. If survey questions don't help answer the big question, don't use them.

As you define the big question, keep in mind who is most likely to have the answers you seek. Often this is self-evident, but not always. For example, when exploring who influences students in choosing a college, some administrators automatically survey guidance counselors, parents, high school teachers, and others. A better strategy is to survey prospective students about who most influenced their decision. Then survey the people the students identified as important.

The final question that helps shape your research agenda is one of the most important: How are you going to apply the results; what are you going to do with the data? What policy and program changes do you anticipate making? The very best research keeps this outcome firmly in mind. Knowing how you will use the data helps you not just shape the questionnaire but decide how to analyze the data and present the results.

At this point in the project, it is important to establish the range of possibilities. You must determine how receptive your senior administrators and other groups will be to the data. It is very frustrating to gather results that provide insight and direction—and then have the president or chief administrators ignore them. Ascertain the range of possibilities before starting the project. If the president really doesn't want to change the curriculum or move the campus, don't explore these issues.

Step 2: Design the research methodology

Now that the research agenda is beginning to take shape, you must decide which

Table 4-3.
Research Strategy Grid

Research Question	Audience	Methodology	Population	Validity Sought	Sample Size
How do parents perceive the institution?	Parents	Telephone survey	2,000	95 percent	322
Why do major donors give to the institution?	Major donors	Personal interviews	95*	100 percent	All
How do alumni feel about the institution?	Alumni	Mail survey	12,000	95 percent	375

*Because this population is so small, you must survey the entire universe (everyone in the population).

method(s) are most practical for the study you envision. You might choose different research methods for different audiences. As you develop the strategy, you must also address issues of reliability and confidence.

To help guide your overall research project, you might want to create a Research Strategy Grid that links the important components of each study. As you can see in Table 4-3, such a grid is a useful way to keep things organized.

In this grid, the first column contains the "big question." The second column defines the target audience. The third indicates the chosen methodology. At this point some judgment comes into play.

As you choose a method, you must weigh several factors:

- Audience size
- Audience importance or status
- Amount of money available for research
- Level of validity sought
- Time frame for completing the survey
- Geographic distribution of the audience
- Survey length
- Survey complexity
- Sensitivity of survey questions

In the example in Table 4-3, we chose a telephone survey for parents because of their geographic distribution and because the survey will be relatively short. However, we chose personal interviews for the donors because of their status and the small size of their population. Finally, we chose a mail survey for alumni because of the size of the sample and because the intended alumni survey is long, complex, and covers several sensitive issues.

The fourth column gives the population size. You must determine this before you can establish the sample size. Next, establish the level of reliability you want. At this point you must ask yourself three key questions: In relation to the rest of the audiences being studied,

- How important is this particular audience?
- How important are these data?
- What major decisions will we make as a result?

Because of the direct relationship between cost and reliability, use these questions to guide your thinking about the level of validity you should seek.

The final column, sample size, comes from computing the reliability level sought and the size of the population.

Consider three rules as you choose your research strategy. First, there is a relationship between the significance of the decision to be made and the amount of time and money you should spend on research to support it. In other words, decisions that will have far-reaching implications warrant more research.

Second, as the complexity of the project increases, balance quantitative research methods (surveys) with qualitative research methods (interviews and focus groups). This will improve the overall quality and validity of the final data.

When designing your strategy, make sure you begin discussing the type of research after isolating the questions and the audience. It can be disastrous to begin a market research study by saying "let's do a focus group" before deciding what and whom you want to examine.

Finally, remember that a good research methodology protects not only the subject and the data but the credibility of the researcher.

Step 3: Write the research instrument

For many people, writing the survey instrument is the hardest part of the research process. Although experience plays an important part, these guidelines will help you get off to a quick start.

First, consider the methodology. Telephone surveys are generally shorter and less complex; mail surveys, because the recipients will read them, can be longer and cover more complex issues. Focus groups and personal interviews are usually more conversational in nature.

Second, concentrate on the research agenda. Why are you doing this? What do you hope to learn? What decisions will you make as a result? Your survey must focus on answering these three questions; if a potential question does not, don't include it.

Remember to move from general questions to specific questions, from safe questions to sensitive ones. As in any good interview, save the most difficult questions for later; open with those that are easy to answer and that gain the respondents' trust.

Open-ended and close-ended questions

Most surveys use two different kinds of questions. Open-ended questions allow respondents to answer in their own words; close-ended questions ask respondents to choose from a list of possible answers.

Sample open-ended question:

What is your favorite part of the alumni magazine?

There are several kinds of close-ended questions:

- Dichotomous (no measure of intensity)

  Do you remember receiving the homecoming announcement?

  ☐ Yes ☐ No

- Multiple choice (no measure of intensity or direction)

  Do you prefer to take classes in

  ☐ the morning ☐ the weekend ☐ the afternoon
  ☐ no preference ☐ the evening ☐ don't know

- Scaled (used to measure intensity or direction)

  How important was the net cost (after aid) of this college in your decision to attend?

  Very important ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Not important at all

There is a great deal of debate about which types of questions are best. With close-ended questions, the respondents must choose from the answers offered, so you must take great care that the answers cover the full range of possibilities. There is also some loss of detail. However, close-ended questions take less space on the instrument, are easier for respondents to complete, are less likely to be misinterpreted, and are less expensive to tabulate and analyze.

Whereas open-ended questions allow a much greater variety of answers, they are also less likely to be interpreted properly and completed and are much more expensive to analyze.

Generally, the best surveys use both kinds. The majority of the survey questions are close-ended, and open-ended questions are used to gather data for which you have developed no succinct set of responses. Open-ended questions are also useful in gathering anecdotal data that might be used to illustrate other data.

As you develop your questions, remember . . .

- Seek only information that is not available elsewhere.
- Test both directions and questions to make sure they are clear and simple.
- Use examples to illustrate any questions that may be confusing.
- Place personal or sensitive questions later in the survey.
- Ask important questions more than once and in more than one way.
- Do not put the most important questions at the end of the survey.
- Clarity is essential. All items must mean the same thing to all respondents. Avoid terms like "several," "most," and "usually."
- Vary the types of questions.
- Do not talk down to respondents.
- Do not assume too much knowledge on their part.
- Avoid hypothetical questions; they will get you hypothetical answers.
- Avoid negative questions; respondents often misread them. For instance, people may overlook the negative word, then give an answer opposite to their real opinion.
- Avoid questions that contain stereotypes, slang, or emotionally loaded words.
- Avoid technical terms, abbreviations, jargon, and "big words" that some respondents may not understand.
- Avoid items that require people to respond to two separate ideas with a single answer.
- Avoid biased or leading questions. If you hint at the type of answer you prefer, respondents may tell you what you want to hear.
- Avoid questions that embarrass respondents or make them defensive.
- Use close-ended questions where possible, but go for answers that are more revealing than yes and no.
- People are less likely to complete long surveys than short ones, so construct as few items as your objectives will allow.
- Take advantage of desktop publishing and laser printers so the survey is visually appealing.

Quick Glance

Asking Better Questions

There is as much art as science to writing good research questions. Two helpful sources are Ken Metzler's *Creative Interviewing* and Stanley Payne's *The Art of Asking Questions*.

Table 4.4.
Sources for Statistical Software

StatPac (612) 925-0159
SPSS (800) 543-5815
Minitab (800) 448-3555
Survey Pro (800) 478-7839
P-Stat (609) 466-1688

Software considerations

Keep in mind the statistical software you will use to analyze the data. There is nothing more frustrating than having a box of 375 surveys that your software cannot analyze. When you've finished the first draft of the instrument, ask your resident statistics-software expert to evaluate the suitability of your question formats.

Chances are someone in the department of psychology, sociology, or education already has statistical software you can borrow. However, if you need to buy software, check out the packages listed in Table 4-4.

Check each software choice for the following:

- Will it help you develop the survey?
- How easily can you input and verify data?
- Does it provide the analyses you need?
- Does it include a graphics package?
- Will it easily export data to Excel, QuattroPro, or Lotus?

Conduct a pretest

There is no survey instrument anywhere that wouldn't be improved with a pretest. To conduct it, ask a subset of your sample to complete the survey. Afterward, have the subjects evaluate and comment on its apparent purpose, its contents and length, the order and construction of the questions, and the instructions. This will greatly improve the quality of your instrument.

Table 4-5.
Breakdown of Donor Pool

Donor Pool	Size of Donation	Pop. of Donors
1	$10,000 or more	275
2	$3,000 to $9,999	450
3	Less than $3,000	1,275

Step 4: Draw the sample

To be statistically valid and projectionable, you must draw the sample correctly. Correct sampling means that everyone in the population has an equal chance to be chosen for the study.

Assume, for example, that you are completing a survey of potential donors. There are 2,000 people in this population, and you want a reliability level of 95 percent. To achieve this level of confidence, you will need a sample of 322.

If the population is homogeneous, you can use a basic random sample. This is sometimes called "nth name sampling" because you choose every nth name from the larger population. Divide your sample population of 2,000 by 322, and draw every sixth name from a randomly generated list. (Never choose the first 322 people. Most lists are organized alphabetically, geographically, or chronologically, and taking the sample from the first part of the list would make the names not representative. Fortunately, database software often includes provisions for randomly generating lists, so it should not be difficult to develop a truly representative sample.)

If the population is heterogeneous, use a stratified random sample. This means you actually break the larger population into subpopulations that you have determined are important, then sample each subpopulation separately. For example, you might break the larger group of 2,000 potential donors into three segments according to the size of the gift they are able to give.

Consider arranging the prospective-donor pool as we have done in Table 4-5.

A stratified random sample would require you to treat each subpopulation as a separate study. In other words, you would have to draw a specific number of names randomly from each of the three pools. The level of validity you seek, of course, would determine the number of names.

If you are completing a survey of prospective students, you might want to divide your larger sample into several smaller ones to categorize students by ethnicity, household income, distance from the institution, or some other characteristic or quality you feel is important.

Of course, it is possible to stratify every large population into smaller subsets. However, you must always balance the need to stratify with expediency and economy. Stratified studies are more complicated, take longer, and cost more. In most cases you should never go beyond two or three levels of stratification.

At this stage in the project, you must also begin to think about probable response rates. This is especially true for mail surveys because responses have consistently slipped over the past decade. Response rate is less of an issue for telephone surveys because you generally keep calling until you complete an adequate number.

When you assign levels of reliability to a study, you assume a response rate of at least 50 percent for each sample. If the response rate is less, you have what is called nonresponse bias; more people didn't respond than did.

There are three basic strategies for dealing with nonresponse bias. First, oversample your population. For example, if your study calls for a sample of 370, you should consider surveying twice or even three times that many. This oversampling will help boost response rates.

Second, include incentives with your survey. Mail surveys often include incentives such as cash, the opportunity to win a larger sum of cash or a prize through a drawing, or a small gift such as a calendar, booklet, or coupon.

A third strategy to reduce nonresponse bias is to use ART, an acronym that reminds you to

- Announce the study with a postcard.
- Remind participants to complete the survey (use another postcard or perhaps a second survey).
- Thank respondents for their help.

ART is especially suited for mail surveys, though the basic strategy works for all kinds of research.

All of these strategies must be implemented *a priori*. There is nothing you can do to salvage a study after it suffers from nonresponse bias.

Step 5: Complete the study

Follow the research methodology and timelines you have developed. Monitor return rates. For important studies, be prepared to oversample or send reminders when the response rate fails to meet projections.

Quick Glance

Conducting a Pretest

A pretest can dramatically improve the quality of your research instrument. Draw a sample of 10 to 15 people and have them complete the survey. Ask them to think about:

- Clarity of the opening instructions
- Clumsy or unclear wording
- Order of questions
- Clarity of instructions on skipping certain questions
- Lack of alternatives such as "don't know" or "does not apply"
- Inadequate space for writing responses to open-ended questions
- Leading or confusing questions
- Confusing scale devices
- Their own fatigue, tendency to skip questions, or loss of interest

When they are done, hold a group discussion about the experience and take notes on problem areas and suggestions for improvement.

Quick Glance

Increasing Response Rates

Nonresponse is a growing problem in mail surveys. To help increase your response rate, consider the following strategies:

- Use the 2x rule (mail twice as many surveys as you need to achieve your sample size).
- Place a short announcement in an appropriate newsletter about the study's importance.
- Use monetary, emotional, or tangible incentives.
- Send participants a presurvey announcement postcard.
- Time the survey to avoid holidays and calendar conflicts.
- Use a personalized cover letter from a prestigious person.
- Use quality reproduction of all written surveys and cover letters.
- Mail it first class (hand-stamped).
- Include return postage on pre-addressed envelopes.
- Send a thank-you/reminder postcard a few days after mailing the survey.
- Send a second survey and cover letter to people who have not returned the first survey.

Step 6: Input and analyze data

As surveys are returned or interviews done, check them for validity and completeness. Before entering each survey into the computer, number it so you can later compare or verify randomly selected surveys against the data to assure the input's accuracy.

Inputting the data from close-ended questions is usually just a matter of typing in the responses. Handling data from open-ended questions is more problematic. All responses must first be read, then categorized, and then entered. This process converts open-ended data to close-ended data so that you can analyze it with the other close-ended responses.

In most cases, analysis is relatively straightforward and includes descriptive statistics such as percentages (frequency counts) and statistics that highlight central tendencies and the shape of distributions such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. In a few cases, you might want to use more sophisticated techniques such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) or regression analysis.

The crosstab, an extremely useful method, allows you to look at a relationship between two variables. For example, suppose you have the questions listed in Table 4-6.

Table 4-6.
Crosstab of the Relationship Between Two Variables

		Number	Percent
What year are you?	freshman	40	40 percent
	sophomore	24	24 percent
	junior	20	20 percent
	senior	16	16 percent
	TOTAL	100	100 percent
Do you live:	on campus	60	60 percent
	off campus	40	40 percent
	TOTAL	100	100 percent

A crosstab, as in Table 4-7, would allow you to examine the relationship between where students live and their year in college. Crosstabs allow you to pinpoint relationships between different questions and responses.

Table 4-7
Where Students Live, by Percentage

	On Campus	Off Campus
Freshmen	85.0	15.0
Sophomores	70.8	29.2
Juniors	30.0	70.0
Seniors	18.8	81.2

Analysis of qualitative research is usually not very sophisticated. It typically involves preserving and categorizing comments drawn from in-depth interviews and focus groups and, within context, using these comments to support quantitative data. The result will be a highly representative picture of the data.

Step 7: Present the results

Presenting the findings actually involves two steps: writing a detailed final report and deciding which parts of it you want to present. The written report is the document of record. If your research and its conclusions are to be accepted, they must be well-written. At the very least, the report should include the following:

- Introduction
- Statement of the problem
- Goals and purpose of research
- Brief overview of the methodology

A more detailed methodology should be in the appendix of the final report.

- Analysis of all data
- Executive summary
  - Review of key data
  - Relevant cross-tabulations
  - Implications
  - Strategies for implementation
  - Areas of further research
  - Conclusion
- Appendices
  - Detailed methodology
  - Sample of instruments
  - Hard copy of all analyses

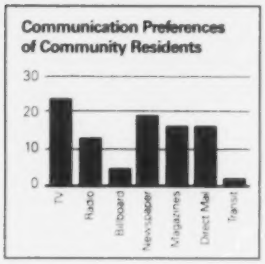
The tone of the report is important. It must be authoritative yet nontechnical. The report should include a clear table of contents so readers can focus on the parts most important to them. The methodology section should include information on survey design and pretesting, the timeline for the study's execution, response rates, and a description of the statistical software and analyses used.

The best reports often open with a demographic snapshot of the people who completed the surveys. This helps provide perspective on the findings.

As you write the report, avoid the tendency to focus only on the negative findings. In fact, it is often useful to stress positive findings early in the report to increase support for the research.

The presentation of your research is also extremely critical. The integrity of your study, and your reputation, may rest on the quality of this presentation.

Figure 4-1.
Sample Graph



The goal of market research is to present information on which people can act—to make that information accessible and understandable. Most people are not interested in raw data. Instead, they want real answers to their tough questions.

When designing the presentation, remember three cardinal rules. First, by emphasizing everything, you actually emphasize nothing. Be judicious in deciding how much of your data to present. Second, people can absorb only so much information, and most have trouble dealing with endless columns of numbers. Take the time to present the most salient bits of data in high-quality graphs such as the one in Figure 4-1.

Finally, remember that you exercise enormous power when you decide what elements of the research to present and how to present them. The simple act of graphing a data element can make it appear more important than data you did not graph.

Develop a research cycle

Because there is no shortage of potential research studies and audiences, it is often useful to develop a research cycle. This allows you to survey key audiences systematically. Although the nature of your institution, its budgetary commitment to market research, and its specific marketing challenges will affect the design of your research cycle, the cycle represented in Table 4-8 offers some initial direction and insight as to the frequency of oft-undertaken studies.

Do it yourself or go outside?

Whether to conduct market research yourself or seek outside help is an important question you must answer fairly early. A few guidelines should help your thinking.

Staying inside

Undertaking the research yourself may save you money. Additionally, your intimate familiarity with your institution is a bonus. Of course, you are also aware of in-house research resources upon which you can depend.

Going outside

Hiring outside help will save you time. This is especially true when you are conducting multiple studies or when your internal resources are tight. Also, outside companies often have more expertise. They can correctly match the research question, the audience, and the type of study to be undertaken.

In addition, an outside researcher has no stake in the findings—no hidden agenda—and is not trying to use data to prove something. This impartiality and objectivity is especially important if you are examining a sensitive issue. Finally, go outside when you need perspective on the findings. Good research is more than collecting data; it uses data to provide direction for improving programs and strategies. One of the biggest reasons colleges and universities go to a company that specializes in higher education research is that they realize the importance of data interpretation and application. It is one thing to collect data but quite another to know what to do with it.

Options to lower research costs

For some institutions, the biggest obstacle to market research is its cost. Here are some ideas to increase cost-effectiveness.

Check secondary sources

Before you begin a primary research project, see if secondary research is available from an association or consortium to which you belong. The World Wide Web is also a good source of secondary data.

Develop a central research registry

It is not unusual for more than one office at a college to initiate research projects. This can mean duplicate studies or portions of studies, missed opportunities to piggyback, and wasted dollars and time. To avoid this problem, consider developing a central research registry that keeps track of who is doing what study.

Involve faculty experts

For a sophisticated study, seek guidance from faculty experts in statistics or research design. Their input and direction may save you time and money. Take care, however, that the topic of study will have no impact on any faculty involved. For example, you would not want a psychology professor to participate in the evaluation of publications produced by her husband working in campus public relations.

Scale down the study's size

Some colleges and universities insist on trying to survey an entire population when a representative sample would do fine. Instead of trying to see how all 18 of your constituent publics perceive you, rank-order these publics and seek information from the most important five or six. There are options for scaling down a research project that will not affect its quality.

Choose a less expensive type of research

There is an enormous difference in the costs of doing 370 mail surveys and 370 phone surveys. With minor modifications, less expensive strategies may gain the same information.

When possible, use close-ended questions

Questions that ask respondents to choose from an established series of answers (yes or no; very good, good, or not very good; and the like) are much easier and cheaper to tabulate.

Pretest your instruments

A solid pretest can uncover questions that need rewording or a word here and there that is not universally understood. Revising your survey will increase its validity.

Table 4-8.
Research Cycle

Annually
Survey of nonmatriculants
Survey of nonapplicants
Survey of prospective students
Every two years
Survey of prospective students
Survey of current students
Survey of noninquirers
Survey of high school influencers
Survey of donors
Survey of community leaders
Every three years
Survey of parents
Survey of general community
Survey of alumni
Survey of former donors
Survey of faculty and staff

Develop a research cycle

A research cycle involves doing smaller studies each year rather than one massive study every three years. Not only will you have more control over the research, you will also be able to focus on current problems and opportunities. In addition, you will be able to monitor your market continually, probably pay less for the research, and assimilate data more easily.

Balance what you need to know with what would be interesting to know

One quick way to cut your costs is to reduce the size of the survey. I have seen three-page surveys burgeon to eight or more pages after everyone in the administration has a chance to add a few favorite questions. When looking over the questions, ask yourself, "How can I realistically use these data to improve my marketing and communication effort?"

Use sound methodology

A solid, balanced research methodology will increase the integrity and vitality of your research data. Don't cut corners and be forced to redo the study.

"A solid, balanced research methodology will increase the integrity and vitality of your research data."

Standardize your instruments

Writing the survey instrument is one of the most expensive components of a research project. If possible, standardize your instruments and get all possible life out of them. This is extremely important if you are trying to create longitudinal data.

When to conduct research

Among the many times when it is important to conduct research, five are probably most important.

First, conduct research when you are making million-dollar decisions. A few years ago I was asked to complete a study for an Eastern college that had four regional campuses but, following a budget crisis, could afford to operate only three. Sound research provided the information needed about which campus should be closed and how to consolidate the other three.

Second, conduct research when you want to test a new idea or concept. Spending a few thousand dollars on research can prevent you from making very costly and very public advertising or publication mistakes.

Third, conduct research when you sense that your marketplace or target audiences are changing. You might want to undertake research if you are facing more competition for each donated dollar, struggling to recruit students, or finding that fewer and fewer people have a good idea of what you are all about.

Fourth, conduct research if you are new, are working in a new area, or have lost your perspective. Research can quickly clarify and prioritize the issues and options before you. Early in my career, a college president hired me to complete a study because he had lost faith in a senior administrator. He felt he was not being adequately informed about an issue and wanted to find out what was happening.

Finally, conduct research when you cannot afford to be wrong. When dollars are tight, time is critical, or public opinion is shaky, research can keep you from making costly, and often very public, mistakes.

The politics of research

It is important to recognize at the outset that market research can become political. Generally, this occurs for three reasons.

First, data can upset existing, perhaps widely held, paradigms. Second, research often reveals data about performance and productivity. For instance, if alumni are dissatisfied with the alumni magazine, it is reasonable to focus some attention on the editor's abilities. And third, research often results in a reallocation of funds. Undertaking a marketing plan, creating a video for major donors, or sending the president out on an eight-city tour all cost money—and more often than not, money to fund these activities will be reallocated from other sources. Henry Kissinger once said that the reason politics in academics is so intense is because the stakes are so small. Well, the stakes may not be small, but some administrators' provincial outlook may be.

"Henry Kissinger once said that the reason politics in academics is so intense is because the stakes are so small."

Dealing with the potential political fallout of market research involves five strategies.

Win support from the top

First and foremost, you must get demonstrated support from the top: Your president and senior administrators must actively support the research project. Part of their support must be a willingness not only to conduct the research but to act on the results.

Get your ducks in a row

Having the administration on your side is half the battle. Now you must spread ownership to colleagues, potential adversaries, and subordinates by

- Demonstrating the need for the research
- Explaining why these data must be collected now
- Showing how these data will be used
- Citing ways the research may save institutional dollars

Stewart Dyke, a colleague at Denison University, used to remind me that if I didn't involve people in the takeoffs, they wouldn't be around for the crash landings. In other words, seek people's advice and input at the beginning of the project so they'll be there if you need their help later on. His advice was good 10 years ago, and it is even better now.

Use correct methodology

An indirect way of attacking you and your recommendations is to attack the methodology of your research. In my experience, scrutiny is most likely to focus on sampling

procedure and response rates. So take great care to follow a correct methodology and sampling process.

Make it work the first time

Your first study must succeed. If it doesn't, you may not be given an opportunity to conduct research in the future. With that in mind . . .

- Don't promise more than you can deliver.
- Have a consultant or campus expert help with your first study.
- Begin with a small study and proceed slowly until you gain experience.
- Make your first study as nonpolitical as possible. Don't study faculty workloads—this is too political. Instead, study something both useful and that faculty will support. Later, when you have learned more about research and earned their trust, it might be more appropriate to study something a bit more controversial.

Explain and apply results in an understandable way

One of the quickest ways to lose institutional support for market research is to fail to explain the results or show how those results will be applied. Everyone can point to a research study that sits on a shelf somewhere because the data either couldn't be applied or were not applied.

Conclusion

The goal of market research is to present information on which you can act. I hope this chapter will allow you to create or refine your market-research strategies so they will do a better job providing the information you need to guide your programs. As you create your questions and design your strategies, keep in mind some guiding principles of market research:

- Don't ask a question if you can't do anything with the answer.
- Ask important questions as often and of as many different people as possible.
- Remember, it always takes longer than you think.
- Balance your research methods.
- Separate what you need to know from what you are interested in knowing.
- Have an idea of what you hope to learn, but expect some surprises.

5

Image *Is* Everything

"I just couldn't attend that other school. Even though it offered me more aid and even though it was in a more attractive location, I really had not heard of it before they started sending me stuff in the mail. I decided to go to a college I had heard of."

—A focus group high-school senior in Aurora, Illinois

Image. The very word conjures up fears of superficiality and lack of depth. But astute administrators have borrowed a page from business's playbook and learned that their institution's image or reputation is one of their most precious and powerful marketing tools.

Let me offer a few thoughts to support this point. First, it is well established that people are more influenced by prior knowledge than by new knowledge. We interpret each day, and each day's messages, in light of the days and messages that have gone before. We see fractions of messages and flesh them out on the basis of what we already know.

For instance, a few months ago I had the opportunity to conduct a series of focus groups for a client on the West Coast. As part of this research, I asked groups of high school juniors to give their impressions of viewbook covers from eight different colleges. In one group of covers, the college names were not masked. All the students picked one well-known college as the most academic, the most prestigious, and the institution they would most like to attend. For the second group of students I masked the names of the colleges. The students responded only to how the covers looked and were not biased by the institution's name. The viewbook that had fared so well with the first group was ignored by the next.

Second, image has a tremendous and often underappreciated effect on college choice. Each year, Stamats Communications asks thousands of high school students

and first-year college students why they chose the college they did. Just as routinely, they offer a handful of reasons: image or reputation, location, cost, the availability of a specific major, and safety. And when asked to choose their top reason, they often choose image.

Fred Gehrung, president of Gehrung and Associates, a media-relations company in Keene, N.H., affirms this point: "In today's uncertain economy and intensely competitive environment, there is one thing a college or university cannot economize on—its reputation. Prospective students and families need to be even more certain about the institution they select, about the quality of education it offers, and about the outcome, meaning the return on the investment of effort and money. Reputation now is more important than ever." Gehrung goes on to say, "Every mention of your college or university is an investment in its future, for it nourishes awareness that converts to respect. Like it or not, the public equates a high profile with quality."

Third, awareness of a college's name or reputation is a pivotal first step in foundation work. An advancement officer at a client college noted that it is significantly easier to make the case with a foundation when it knows all about you before you set a foot in the door: "You don't need to spend valuable time introducing yourself. If they already know you, you can begin discussing specifics almost immediately."

"Institutions with strong images tend to have a greater percentage of annual fund participation."

Foundation cultivation recognizes this point. Colleges often target foundations a year or more before contacting them with a grant or gift proposal. They use that year to heighten the institution's name recognition among foundation officials and in the region the foundation most often supports.

Fourth, institutions with strong images are able to recruit better faculty, and faculty are more likely to stay longer. During the next decade, the crisis in faculty hiring will have a greater impact on lesser-known institutions as a declining faculty pool flocks to institutions with strong names—names that will look better on curriculum vitae and names that are often more able to offer the resources good faculty need.

Fifth, institutions with strong images tend to have a greater percentage of annual fund participation. The national average is about 21 percent for all institutions. However, colleges such as the University of Chicago, Stanford, and Boston University have annual fund participation rates that are much higher. Centre College has an annual participation rate of 62.09 percent. Any effort to enhance the institution's reputation will increase the value of the degree and build pride and ownership among alumni, donors, and other key audiences.

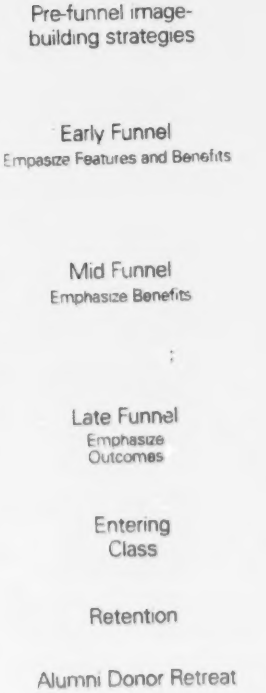
And finally, image building is seen as a legitimate pre-recruiting function at a small but growing number of market-oriented institutions. As the diagram in Figure 5-1 of a recruiting funnel indicates, successful funnel strategies begin with image-enhancement strategies.

Let me offer two final bits of anecdotal evidence on the importance of image. The first is drawn from outside the educational community. A few years ago *Harvard Business Review* conducted an interview with Phil Knight, president of Nike. During the interview, Knight said Nike really began to soar when officials realized that they were not in the shoe business but in the image business. Sure, they make shoes, con-

ceivably some of the best shoes in world. But Nike sells much more than shoes—it sells the Nike swoosh.

Recently I had a conversation with a student interested in attending Yale. As you know, Yale is located in a very tough city—New Haven. The student and her parents were very much aware of Yale's location. When I asked if they were concerned about the city, they said yes. But they also said that though it was a concern, it wouldn't affect their final decision because "Yale is Yale." In other words, the image or reputation of Yale—that of a top-flight academic institution—is more important than other variables.

Figure 5-1.
Recruiting Funnel



Understanding institutional images

An image is a set of attitudes or beliefs that a person or audience holds about an institution. An image is how you look, and an image is who you are. Though this may seem fairly straightforward, it is complicated by a few factors.

First, institutions have multiple images. Freshmen view the same institution differently than do seniors. Younger alumni view an institution one way while older alumni often view it another. Tenured faculty look at a college one way while untenured faculty look at it another. Everyone views the institution differently depending on context and perspective.

It is also useful to know that images sometimes lag behind institutional reality, that images change over time and often are not particularly accurate. For example, if you were ever an all-women's school with a strong nursing program, you will always be known, in some quarters, as that type of institution even if you are now coed and the nursing program was eliminated 10 years ago.

Third, whereas most impressions are built over time, they begin with a powerful first impression—an encounter upon which all future images are built. These first impressions, called "moments of truth," are so strong that it is difficult if not impossible to change the direction of an image after a poor first impression.

Fourth, images are relational in two directions—vertical and horizontal. An image's verticality means that if a person encounters one small element of a college such as a poor publication or an obnoxious faculty member, he or she is inclined to project that one small negative image to the entire college or university. At the same time, if he or she encounters a thoughtful publication that conveys its message well, that same positive impression is transferred to the entire institution. One colleague notes, "When they see our decal in the back window of a station wagon, the driver of that station wagon becomes the institution."

Images must also be considered in a horizontal context: People often compare one institution with another. Repeatedly we hear, "Yes, but it's not as good as . . ." This consideration is often overlooked. When colleges and universities develop an image strategy, they must clearly understand the image of the institutions and, in the case of fund raising, organizations with which they are most often compared. Images are seldom evaluated in a vacuum; they are best understood and improved in a context that includes your competition.

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Characteristics of institutions with weak images

At a recent national conference I had an opportunity to make a presentation on images. During the session I asked participants to define the characteristics of institutions with weak images. They responded with the following:

Weak image:

- No sense of direction
- Weak academic core and unfocused or dated curriculum
- Poor morale
- High faculty and administrative turnover
- Frequent job-related grievances and high absenteeism
- Poor retention
- Difficulty in communicating a clear message
- Spending more to recruit a student
- Spending more to generate donations
- Low annual fund participation
- Lack of local/community support
- Vandalism

"One maxim of marketing is that perception is reality."

Truth vs. perception

There is one subtle aspect of image that must be explored further—the difference between truth and perception. One maxim of marketing is that perception is reality. In other words, how people perceive you is how—in their minds, hearts, and pocketbooks—you are. If they believe your academic programs are poor, then having the best academic programs in the country won't help. If prospective donors believe that the institution is ill-managed, they are less likely to contribute.

Al Cubbage, former director of marketing and communications at Drake University, now at Northwestern, is well aware of the difference between perception and reality. "A few years ago Drake conducted focus groups among high-school students in its main markets to learn more about how the college was perceived," he says. "The difference in image from market to market was striking. In the Chicago area, Drake was considered a 'pretty good school,' one that was quite acceptable for good students to attend but not a top-ranked institution. By contrast, students in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area viewed Drake as a 'prestige' institution, one that was difficult to get into and ranking just below Ivy League schools."

Which was correct? "Both," says Cubbage. "For the audience in each of these markets, the reality of Drake was how they perceived it. And Drake's success in attracting students in these markets depended to a great extent on meeting those perceptions."

Being good isn't good enough

It does little good to have solid programs, great faculty, outstanding students, and wonderful facilities if no one knows about them. Merely being good is not enough; people have to know you are good. Routinely, during a visit to a campus, the presi-

dent and I have a chance to chat by ourselves. During the conversation she or he invariably says, somewhat proudly, "We are the best-kept secret east (or west) of the Mississippi (or Hudson or Kokosing or whatever)."

A key underlying assumption

Because there is sometimes the temptation to overstate the power of strong image, remember this important underlying assumption: A strong image will persist only if the institution is credible in an area valued by its clientele. For some and perhaps most institutions, this will be academic quality. Other institutions, however, may offer a relationship to the church or be known as an athletic powerhouse. Institutions with strong images generally have something they are known and valued for.

Managing your institution's image

Strong images don't just happen. They require the commitment of top administrators. They require a clear understanding of who your audiences are and how you are currently perceived. They require detailed planning and execution. And they require a long-term budgetary commitment. In short, images must be managed.

Image management begins by accepting the fact that an institution's most significant asset is its image. Image management recognizes that an institution's image must be continually built and maintained so that when people hear your institution's name, they immediately have a clear idea of who and what you are about.

Romancing the brand

David Martin calls this aspect of image management "romancing the brand." In his book by the same title, he examines how businesses create brand loyalty in the hearts and minds of consumers. Although the book focuses almost exclusively on businesses and consumers, its application to student recruiting, fund raising, and institutional marketing is as obvious as it is crucial. He writes that "brand mystique accrues by projecting a consistent personality over time. . . . Your creative selling message must build awareness of the brand and of its special advantages over a period of time. It must sustain this awareness so that the brand will be remembered when the need arises." Martin goes on to use an illustration from David Ogilvy in *Ogilvy on Advertising*:

> What would you think of a politician who changed his public personality every year? Have you noticed that Winston Churchill has been careful to wear the same ties and the same hats for 50 years—so as not to confuse us? Think of all the forces that work to change the personality and image of the brand from season to season. The advertising managers come and go. The copywriters, the art directors, and the account executives come and go. Even the agencies come and go. What guts it takes, what obstinate determination, to stick to one coherent creative policy, year after year, in the face of the pressures to "come up with something new" every six months.

Many institutions would do well to adopt Churchill's strategy.

Let me illustrate romancing the brand another way. A few years ago, when my son was attending preschool, he came home with a poster of the University of Iowa Hawkeye football team. When I asked about it, he said that everyone in his school, not just his class, received the same poster that morning. I later learned that the poster had been distributed to a number of preschools in the city. Through the distribution of the poster, the University of Iowa was romancing the brand and building name recognition and brand loyalty among a group of five-year-olds.

The image formula

Image management acknowledges a fundamental image formula that may be expressed as follows:

Institutional Image Formula
(Accuracy + Clarity + Consistency) x Continuity

> **"Some fund-raising publications are so elaborate and complex that you don't have any idea what they are trying to accomplish."**

First, *accuracy*. Everything that you do, tell, and show about your institution must be accurate. There is a strong tendency toward hype in many recruiting materials and fund-raising case statements. But if the college or university depicted in the video or publications is not the same college or university that students find when they arrive, they will leave. And if donors feel deceived or misled, they are increasingly likely to ask for their money back. At the very least, they will not give again. It is imperative that what you say about yourself be accurate, truthful, and demonstrable.

Clarity has several dimensions. First, are your individual messages clear and understandable? Second, do people know why they are receiving the message? And third, after reading (or hearing or seeing or touching) them, do they know what they are expected to do next?

William of Occum, a 12th-century philosopher, was fond of saying that the simple solution is usually the better solution. I believe he had a point. Often I will read a recruiting publication that does not contain the name of the institution on the cover. Some fund-raising publications are so elaborate and complex that you don't have any idea what they are trying to accomplish. I remember one capital campaign publication that clearly asked for the donation but didn't include information about where or to whom to send it. Sometimes in an effort to be clever, unique, and creative, we forget to be clear. And if people don't understand our messages, they are not likely to act on those messages.

Clarity has a second dimension—the need for your messages, especially publications messages, to compete successfully in the mail. Too often, publications and message strategies are designed in a vacuum. Designers do not understand that students and donors will be receiving a multitude of publications and solicitations from other institutions at the same time and that before your publications can be read, they must be opened, and before they are opened, they must be noticed.

The third critical component of a strong image is *consistency*. While this may seem obvious, few colleges and universities heed this bit of advice. Consistency means settling on a logo and family look and sticking to it. Consistency means developing an

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annual institutional fact sheet so that everyone at the institution uses the same facts and figures (number of majors, students, size of the endowment, books in the library) to describe it. And consistency means using the same look in fund raising and advertising and campus signage and vehicle identification and, well, you get the idea.

Perhaps the most important aspect of a strong image is *continuity.* Because it can take images years and years to develop fully, themes and messages must be given time to work.

Strong, well-conceived looks offer the best chance for continuity. They may require investing more time and money at the concept stage, but the resulting look will offer tremendous long-term value. Institutions such as Beloit and Cornell College and Westmont, with a keen eye toward stewardship of their resources, invest a considerable amount of time, money, and thought at the concept stage so their looks will last longer.

There is often a strong, even overwhelming feeling on the part of many that the visual aspects of an image—logos and "looks"—should be dramatically revised every year or two. Keep in mind, though, that your audiences change constantly. The worst reason to change a look is because you, your staff, or even your president is tired of it. A bigger and more important question is "is it still working?" If it is, don't mess with it. Your being tired of a look is not enough of a reason to change it. Often I counsel clients that it is far better to use an adequate logo wisely than to develop a new logo every couple of years.

It will take years and often hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars to firmly establish a new look. With this in mind, there are only two good reasons for revamping a logo or look. First, the look is not working. Perhaps it never worked from the beginning, or maybe the marketplace or your institution has changed. If so, reevaluate. Second, you are responding to an opportunity. Perhaps you have an anniversary, special event, campaign, or name change in the works and you want to use a new look to help galvanize the campus and its constituents.

Steps to image management

Image management is both proactive and aggressive. It presumes a commitment to your environment and audiences. It means sunk costs with a long-term payoff. It is management by the numbers, not by institutional wishes and admonitions. It is, in its most complete and full sense, management and typically embraces the following steps:

- Getting top-down buy-in
- Organizing for action
- Defining your audiences
- Evaluating your current image
- Clarifying your goals
- Developing a plan
- Budgeting realistically
- Executing and evaluating

Begin with top-down buy-in

If image management doesn't have the active and aggressive support of top management, it will fail. Strategies will not be coordinated. Activities will not be sustained. And budgets will not be shared. Al Cubbage is quick to point out the need for top-down buy-in: "We're fortunate at Drake to have a president and other key administrators who understand the need for good marketing and provide the support to do it right. We don't spend much money on 'image' advertising; most of our efforts are aimed at eliciting a specific response. But we do spend money on making sure that all of our marketing efforts project a consistent image of our institution."

It is no coincidence, as we have seen from Chapter 4, that institutions with strong images are almost always institutions with strong leadership. This occurs for at least two reasons: because it takes visionaries who are willing to invest time and dollars and even a bit of themselves into building a strong image, and because the many variables that affect an institution's image cross so many departmental and divisional lines that the only way to avoid turf battles is to have decisions made and enforced from on high.

There is a clear "chicken and the egg" issue here. Did the president set about creating a strong image, or did an already strong image attract the president? Because most images take more than one president's tenure to establish, it is hard to establish clear cause and effect. Perhaps a strong president saw the need to begin building a strong image, and that emerging image attracted other strong presidents.

Organize for action

Most institutions have their image-enhancement strategies far too decentralized. The publications office reports to one administrator, media relations to another, and special events to a third. No one knows what the alumni office is up to, and the athletic office won't attend any planning meetings. There is no sharing of goals, no pooling of talent, no stewardship of resources. Where there could be a symphony, there is a cacophony.

Let's look at the scope of the problem. The following offices and individuals probably affect your institution's image:

- President's office
- Academic dean
- Graduate school deans
- Student recruiting office
- Development office
- Alumni office
- Public and community relations office
- Publications office
- Special events office
- Corporate relations office
- Institutional research office
- Athletics department
- Maintenance and grounds department

With this many people, offices, responsibilities, and agendas involved, there is little likelihood that any effective and long-term image-enhancement strategies will be developed, implemented, and maintained. The first step in image management is to deal with this organizational problem.

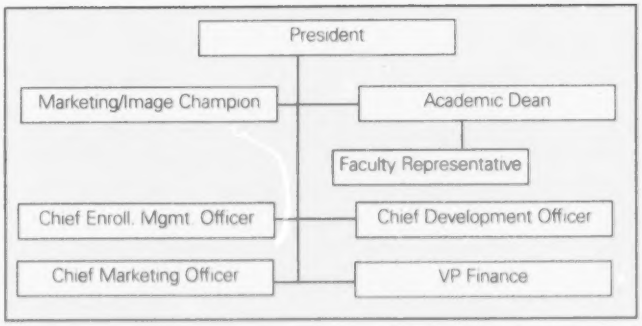

Figure 5-2.
Image Policy Committee

An ad hoc solution

In most cases, colleges and universities resist organizational change. Recognizing this reality, institutions interested in image management must be willing to establish two ad hoc committees: the image-policy committee and the image strategy committee.

The image policy committee (see Figure 5-2) includes the president; chief academic officer; enrollment management, development, and marketing officers; and the senior finance person. The committee also includes the marketing champion, the person designated by the president as the individual in charge of the overall marketing and image-building strategy. In many cases, but not all, this person will be the chief marketing officer. Finally, depending on the political climate on campus, the image-policy committee might also include a faculty representative appointed either by the academic dean or by the faculty governing body.

The primary purpose of this committee is to establish image policy and goals, cross territorial boundaries, and allocate resources and authority. It should not be mired down with technicians—they will have input in the image-strategy committee. (see Figure 5-3)

The first committee must be educated on the role and purpose of a strong image. Its members must become familiar with the tools, strategies, and mechanisms of image building. And they must have the same marketing and image goals. It is not oversimplifying this discussion to say that the image policy committee sets direction and provides guidance for the image/marketing champion. It is up to the champion, working through the image strategy committee, to figure out how to get there.

Under the leadership of the image/marketing champion, the image strategy committee is composed of such stakeholders as faculty, athletics, and even development. However, this committee also includes technocrats—people with the skills and expertise to achieve the image goals outlined by the image policy committee.

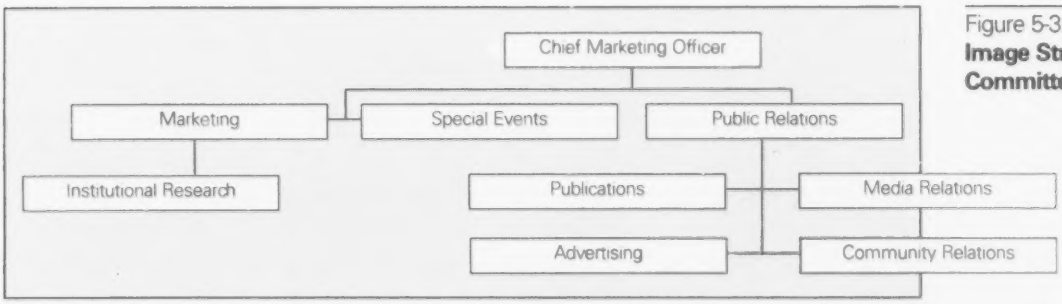

Figure 5-3.
Image Strategy Committee

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In addition to the organizational change outlined above, the image-management model has one other important characteristic—the creation of soft alliances that allow regular policy-making input not only at the board and cabinet level but at the program level.

Through regular interaction, the chief marketing officer must have policy input in academics, student recruiting, fund raising, athletics, alumni, and other offices that are involved in building or projecting strong images.

The goal of this input is not to dictate policy but to educate policy-makers on the ramifications of their decisions. This soft alliance is a guiding and teaching relationship, not a controlling relationship. However, the chief marketing officer has a notable "big stick"—the image mandate from the president and the image-policy committee.

Demand accountability

Organizing for action presupposes the creation of an image czar, a single person responsible for executing the institution's image management strategies. Having a single person in charge is absolutely critical because group accountability means no accountability.

"Having a single person in charge is absolutely critical because group accountability means no accountability."

As I write this I am flying from Washington, D.C., to Chicago. On the seat next to me is a image enhancement plan that a college president asked me to review. The plan is relatively well-conceived. The goals are carefully defined, the budgets seem adequate, and lots of people are involved. What is missing, however, is any sense of who will be in charge. No single person seems to be responsible for seeing that this plan is enacted.

A marketing professional

Who should this single responsible person be? She or he should be highly placed in the administration, having the ear and trust not only of the president but of the larger campus community. And that person must have a clear understanding of marketing and its tools. Often we have seen a seasoned manager, a political insider, a trusted confidant, fail because that person knows nothing about marketing. I must be adamant on this point. In Chapter 8 we will discuss the notion of a marketing champion. Whether you are talking about image management or larger marketing strategies, the need for a champion is paramount.

Define your audiences

Next you must bring order to your universe. Even a brief review of your market and environment will reveal dozens or perhaps hundreds of audiences that clamor for your attention. However, in an era of finite resources, it is impossible to meet everyone's needs. The solution is to set priorities.

Though the list of potential audiences can be extensive, usually only a handful directly affect an institution's future—and the composition of this handful often depends on the type of institution. Publics are interested in how they are perceived by

taxpayers, community leaders, and legislators, whereas privates are more keenly interested in how they are perceived by alumni and parents. Some privates are interested in how sponsoring denominations see them, while some publics need the support of regional employers. Both types of institutions are interested in their perceptions among faculty, current students, and prospective students. Clearly, your institutional and environmental context plays a major role in defining what audiences are most significant to you.

Although your list of audiences is potentially endless, I suspect the primary ones might be drawn from the list in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1.
Audience Sources

Students	Donors	Others
Current students	Alumni	Parents
Traditional prospective students	Current donors	Faculty and staff
Nontraditional prospective students	Former donors	High school guidance counselors
Minority prospective students	Prospective donors	Business leaders
		Community residents
		Religious leaders

Evaluate your current image

As part of managing your image, you must know how you are already perceived. In their haste to set about improving their image, many institutions skip this important step.

Images are best evaluated along the following three dimensions:

- How the institution is perceived by primary audiences
- How the institution projects itself editorially and environmentally
- How the institution is compared with its cohort group

Perception studies

Determining how key audiences see you is relatively straightforward: Decide which of your many audiences are primary, and conduct image and perception studies to ascertain how these important audiences perceive you.

A guideline in image research is that you begin with the question to be answered. In other words, once you define the research question, you usually have a pretty good idea who has the answer. And once you know who has the answer, different research methods make a best fit for different types of audiences. For example, prospective students and parents may be reached through focus groups or mail or telephone surveys. Regional employers, on the other hand, are often best reached through personal or telephone interviews. Faculty often prefer the anonymity of a mail survey. State legislators will require a personal visit. And because alumni are dispersed, often the best way to reach them is through either a mail or a telephone survey.

Your best bet is to reason from the audience back to the methodology. In other words, ask yourself which audience has the answer to the question and then develop the best methodology to query that audience. It is also useful to keep in mind issues of anonymity, sensitivity, and complexity. If your audience might wish to remain anonymous, if the questions are sensitive, or if the questions are complex,

a written survey might be a wise choice.

Obviously these are guidelines. Successful research sometimes involves a little trial and error and the ability to learn from your mistakes. However, if you keep in mind that the question dictates the audience and the audiences dictate the methodology, things should proceed smoothly.

After determining how primary audiences see you, you need to evaluate how you project yourself editorially and environmentally.

Evaluate yourself editorially

An editorial evaluation addresses your formal, written, image-building mechanisms. A realistic appraisal of your editorial media is extremely important because it is through these that most institutions project their image. This involves evaluating not only the product of these mechanisms but the abilities and talents of the people charged with this responsibility.

"If you look good, people will assume you are good."

An editorial evaluation of your image involves not just print but direct mail, advertising, video, audio, and all the mass media. It includes publications as well as media relations. It addresses not only what you say about yourself but how you say it. It evaluates how you allocate dollars and time. It looks at budgets and talent and where you direct your energies. It seeks to answer such questions as these:

- What (and whose) institutional image do we wish to project? What data support this image?
- What is our short- and long-term vision for the institution?
- What are our institution's communication priorities?
- How have we defined our audiences and their needs and expectations?
- Do our communication efforts reflect the needs and expectations of the target audiences?
- How much time/budget/talent do we allocate to priority audiences?
- How and when do we evaluate the effectiveness of our current communication strategies?

Evaluate yourself environmentally

In addition to evaluating how you project yourself editorially, you must evaluate how you project yourself environmentally. How does your campus look? I call this the brick-and-mortar syndrome. It works like this. If you look good, people will assume you are good. If your campus is well groomed, if your signage is clear and consistent, if your buildings and windows are clean, people will assume that your entire campus is well managed. But if you do not tend to your campus, people will wonder what else has been ignored. It is simply amazing how many institutions have forgotten how important it is to wash their windows and sweep their walks.

Evaluate yourself comparatively

The third element of image evaluation is comparative. It is important to know how you compare with your cohort group.

A comparative evaluation is important because most students don't decide between attending your institution and not attending college at all. Rather, they decide between you and another institution. So understanding these other institutions and determining how they compare with you makes extraordinary sense.

Developing a list of cohort colleges can be more difficult than it appears. Refer to Table 5-2. When I consider a college's competition, I like to work with three groups. Assume, for this discussion, that a student has been accepted into your institution and another. If the student always elects to attend that other institution, this is a Category A competition. If the student always elects to attend your institution, this is a Category B competition. And finally, if the student decides to attend your institution half the time and the other institution half the time, this is a Category C competition.

Table 5-2.
Competing Institutions

Type of Competition	Explanation
Category A	Students accepted at both institutions will usually elect to attend the other.
Category B	Students accepted at both institutions will usually elect to attend yours.
Category C	Half the students accepted at both institutions will enroll at yours, and half will enroll at the other.

Institutions should seek to preserve their edge with Category B institutions and should temper their efforts to win share from Category A institutions as any gains will be marginal and will come only at great cost.

Colleges and universities should concentrate image evaluation and enhancement on Category A rather than Category C institutions. This is where they will have the greatest chance to increase their share.

To determine how you compare with Category C institutions, you have to go back to the list of primary audiences. This entails asking, for example, prospective students how you compare on different dimensions with another institution.

Let me give you an example. Recently a client asked Stamats to complete a competitive positioning study. It wanted to know how it compared with seven other institutions on two dimensions—cost and quality. Using a five-point scale, we asked prospective students to evaluate the seven on these two dimensions. We then ran the mean of each response and prepared a scattergram graph like that shown in Figure 5-4. The result shows how the seven institutions compared with one another on cost and quality.

Comparative data such as these are extremely useful in helping to differentiate and position an institution. Chapter 7 will explore competitive positioning in greater depth.

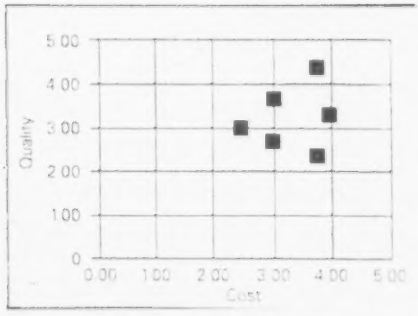

Figure 5-4.
Cost vs. Quality
Source: Stamats Communications, Inc.

Clarify your goals

Your perceptual, editorial, environmental, and comparative research has probably uncovered a multitude of image problems and opportunities. Now comes the sifting and evaluating. In the rush to develop and execute strategies, institutions often overlook the need to establish clear image goals that meet the needs of priority audiences.

When I work with clients to help write clear goals, I keep these basic rules in mind. First, list your goals in priority order. Focus on the truly important. Don't be distracted by whim or politics. Second, keep the list of goals as short as possible. It is deceptively easy to get bogged down.

Third, learn the difference between short-term and long-term goals. Short-term

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goals are those you must accomplish immediately; long-term goals can wait. Or, as one wag says, achieving the short-term goals is what assures a long term.

Finally, good goals are quantifiable. Goals such as "improve our image" or "increase our popularity" are vague and ill-defined. Instead, build goals on the baseline data created in the perceptual research and quantify them. Rather than "improve our image," a better goal is "increase name recognition from 23 percent to 30 percent in the St. Louis metropolitan area during the next 12 months."

The new goal is built on research that established a baseline name-recognition level of 23 percent. Furthermore, the goal focuses on St. Louis. Finally, the goal includes a time period. This is a well-articulated goal.

Declaring your points of pride

An important, though sometimes overlooked, marketing goal is a simple declaration of your points of pride. Points of pride, or, as one client calls them, vivid descriptors, are those characteristics and qualities that you most want people to know about you. When people hear your name, what images do you want to have pop into their heads?

"Points of pride are those characteristics and qualities that you most want people to know about you."

Points of pride must be mission-critical. They must express core values. And it is much more important that they are real than that they are distinctive. Successful points of pride often ring true with donors as well as prospective students.

Consider, for example, the following points of pride from an urban Catholic university:

- Friendly, supportive, safe
- Committed to the liberal arts in a Catholic tradition
- Focused on student learning
  (Note how this point is much more outcomes-oriented than simply saying that you are focused on teaching)

Some marketers overlook the simple, even elegant power of a handful of oft-repeated points of pride. Message theorists know, however, that simple messages repeated often are much more likely to be remembered than complex messages repeated less frequently.

It is very important that institutional points of pride be clarified as part of any image or marketing plan. Points of pride are then communicated and reinforced through recruiting publications, campaign case statements, advertising, tag lines, and any number of other media.

Develop a plan

By now you have set priorities among audiences, conducted the necessary research to identify image problems and opportunities, and articulated a series of concise image goals. Now you must write the plan.

In its most simple form, the image plan—much like a larger marketing plan—is the mechanism through which things get done. A plan addresses the who, what, when, and how.

There is no magic to writing a good plan. But there are a couple of things to keep in mind. First, stay true to your goals. Every element of the plan must clearly support one or more image goals. If it doesn't, delete it.

Second, take advantage of the complete image mix. Earlier we quickly reviewed the many offices and individuals that have an impact on an institution's image. Effective plans take advantage of such media and activities as these:

- Publications
- Direct marketing including direct mail
- Advertising
  - Positional
  - Promotional
- Special events
  - Partnerships between the institution and local grade, junior high, and high schools
  - Science fairs
  - Talented-and-gifted student gatherings
  - Student leadership programs
  - Issues conferences (the environment, technology, human rights, etc.)
- High school relations
- Public relations
- Community relations
- Media relations
  - General news releases
  - Hometown news releases
  - Wild-art photo release (a visually striking photograph accompanied only by a caption)
  - Audio releases
  - Public service announcements
  - Pitch letters (ideas for feature stories pitched to media representatives)
  - Personal contact
  - Fax releases
  - Electronic news releases via autodial modem
  - Proactive speakers bureau and experts list
  - Faculty-penned columns
  - Talk shows
  - Tip sheets to local, regional, and select national media

Third, remember the image formula.

Institutional Image Formula
(Accuracy + Clarity + Consistency) x Continuity

Accuracy, clarity, consistency, and continuity. An image management plan won't work unless it is founded on these four cornerstones.

Fourth, keep it simple. Most image plans are far too complex.

Finally, give it time to work. Perhaps this is related to the need to keep it simple, but it is more than that. Even the most simple plans cannot be rushed. Images are notoriously nebulous and latent. It can take a great deal of time to change how people perceive you. Remember, neither Harvard nor McDonald's was built in a day.

Two final thoughts about your image enhancement plan. First, there is a strong temptation, especially among academics, to confuse process with product. Many institution officials think writing the plan is the same as executing the plan. They spend all their time in meetings and never actually get around to doing anything.

And second, beware of the false siren of perfection. There is no such thing as a perfect image enhancement plan, so don't needlessly delay implementation in the hopes that your plan will keep getting better. As George Patton said, "A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow."

Budget realistically

One of the most problematic aspects of image management is budgeting. Institutions often don't know how much to budget, and while there are no absolutes, there are some guidelines.

"It is most expensive to change a bad image."

In general, plan to spend about 1.5 percent of your annual operating budget on disposable image activities. This is the amount you will spend on programs and strategies, not people. If your annual operating budget is $50 million, you can reasonably expect to spend $750,000 on publications, direct mail, advertising, special events, and other activities.

It is also helpful to consider the levels of image difficulty. It is easiest and least expensive to maintain an already good image. It is more expensive to create a strong image. And it is most expensive to change a bad image. Adjust your budget accordingly.

Remember that as your image strategies begin to work, you can scale back their intensity. For example, if you might want to place a positional ad in each issue of a regional magazine for the first year, place only half that number of ads (every other issue) during the second year. Once the image is established, it takes less effort to maintain it. And once again, you can use baseline data to judge the effectiveness of your campaign and guide the allocation of resources.

You must also hire good, experienced people. In an effort to save a few dollars, institutions sometimes hire young, often inexperienced people to execute their plan. This is false economy. Although you may save on salaries, the mistakes, inexperience, missed deadlines, and lost opportunities will cost you dearly. Bite the budgetary bullet and hire people with experience. The knowledge and understanding of seasoned professionals will make these people a bargain.

Don't forget to support your plan with an adequate budget. It is far better to do fewer things well then to try to do a multitude of things poorly. Rather than underfund high school visits so you can place limited advertising, it is probably better to halt the advertising and spend the money you need to visit the high schools you must.

Finally, manage the plan. I recently heard of a college that overspent its video-production budget by 50 percent. As a result, it had a wonderful video but no money to have it duplicated or distributed.

At a recent CASE meeting I talked with a woman from a small, relatively unknown college in the East. Her president had just asked her to develop an image-enhancement plan that would make their institution "a household word" in New England. She asked her president about additional staffing and funding. The president said that as a professional she should be able to manage the project with current resources. This president has no concept of what it takes to position an institution. It takes more than wishes and good intentions to improve an image, and without funding, any such plan will be doomed.

Execute and evaluate

Now that the plan is written and funded, it is time to act. Implement strategies and activities per the timeline you have established. But as you implement the plan, you must be evaluating its effectiveness.

There are two basic reasons for evaluating a marketing program: to provide data for modifying and increasing the effect of programs in progress (to make midcourse corrections), and to evaluate the effectiveness of completed strategies (so you can adjust ongoing plans).

The original research you conducted to help guide goal development will again prove invaluable because it contains baseline data against which you can evaluate your plan's effectiveness.

"It takes more than wishes and good intentions to improve an image, and without funding, any such plan is doomed."

Conclusion

Each day, thousands of high school students around the country choose a college. As the data suggest, most of these students base their decision on their perception or image of the institution. The fact is, all educational institutions in the United States have an image. But is the image strong, weak, poor, or ambiguous? Is it accurate? Is it consistent? Is it widespread? And perhaps most important, is the image valued by prospective students and parents?

Smart, aggressive, well-administered institutions don't leave their image to chance. They look at their image as their most significant asset and manage that asset carefully. They set priorities among audiences. They conduct market research. They establish clear-cut goals. They write a plan. They support that plan with adequate resources. They do this because they have learned that perhaps image *is* everything.

6

> **"There are two kinds of people in the world: those who divide people into groups and those who do not."**
> —William James

Mixing and Matching

Developing an Effective Segmenting Strategy

In the year 2000 and beyond, colleges and universities must move away from what Philip Kotler and others call "one size fits all" marketing strategies to strategies that focus on meeting the needs of subpopulations within their marketplace.

This notion of dividing large, heterogeneous populations into smaller, homogenous subpopulations is called segmentation. Segmentation is not a new idea for colleges and universities. For years, fund raisers have used different strategies for major donors than for annual fund participants, for foundations than for alumni.

Segmenting is also used on the recruiting side, though far less consistently. Most colleges use the same basic strategy to recruit the majority of their students. There has been some effort of late to develop separate strategies for nontraditional students, students of color, and even honors students, but these are more likely variations on the themes developed in the traditional recruiting funnel than new themes created

specifically for these subpopulations. In addition, these segmented strategies are more likely to deal with promotional variables than with changes to product, price, or place.

A couple of quick terms

Before we can proceed with a detailed discussion of segmentation, let's introduce or reintroduce five terms:

- Segmentation
- Benefit segmentation
- Marketing mix
- Product mix
- Media mix

As stated earlier, *segmentation* is the dividing of heterogeneous populations into smaller homogeneous subsets of that target population. Ideally, the smaller subsets will contain like or very similar demographic, geographic characteristics. One example would be breaking a large donor pool into two smaller pools of major givers and alumni. Another example would be developing separate, distinct recruiting strategies for in-state, out-of-state, and international students.

"Different audience segments have different product-mix needs and expectations."

The opposite of segmentation is aggregation—the use of an undifferentiated marketing strategy. Most colleges and universities, particularly publics, use this aggregated approach to student recruiting.

Benefit segmentation is the division of a mass market according to the benefits that people seek from a product. Benefit segmentation requires that the college or university determine the benefits that target audiences are seeking in the marketing mix. For example, a college, learning that its alumni have a keen interest in supporting the programs from which they graduated, may well organize alumni giving by academic major rather than by year of graduation.

The *marketing mix* is the four controllable variables—product, price, place, and promotion (the four Ps)—that a college or university emphasizes or mixes to meet the needs of its recruiting, fund-raising, and other target audiences.

Product mixes represent various product attributes. As we saw in Chapter 2, different kinds of students and donors value different product mixes. Students of high academic ability are attracted to a product mix that is heavily oriented toward academics. Students who are more social are keenly interested in campus and residence life. Different audience segments have different product-mix needs and expectations.

The *media mix* is the array of promotional strategies that a college or university uses to communicate its marketing mix to prospective target audiences. In many respects, the media mix is used to communicate the product, price, and place elements of the marketing mix.

Why segment?

At the outset, we must answer the basic question: Why develop a segmenting strategy? The reasons include these:

- Segmentation allows you to monitor and survey the needs and expectations of critical target audiences more effectively, thereby continually refining your marketing, product, and media mixes.
- Segmentation allows you to communicate with chosen target audiences more effectively and efficiently.
- Segmentation cuts costs, so you spend less time and money on programs and communication strategies that are misguided and misdirected.

Ethical considerations

Segmentation raises a serious ethical concern. Because of its need to categorize, segmentation is a just a step away from stereotyping. If we segment a large population of prospective students into two categories—those who hope to be engineers and those who hope to teach—there will be a temptation to think that all students interested in engineering think and act alike. This point is illustrated more dramatically by how we segment students of color. Many well-meaning administrators have a tendency to put all students of color into the same segment (or should I say category) and assume that all African-American students and Hispanic students and Asian students pick and choose colleges the same way and have the same academic and social needs. Of course, this isn't so.

As we develop segmenting strategies, we must always take care that we are not playing to our stereotypes and prejudices.

A little segmenting theory

There are three basic approaches to segmentation:

- Mass market strategy
- Concentration strategy
- Multisegment strategy

In a mass market strategy, every member of the target market receives marketing mix A (see No. 1, in Figure 6-1). Users of a mass market strategy make two assumptions: that their target audiences have very similar characteristics and needs that one marketing mix will satisfy, and that though different target audiences within their marketplace may have different needs, it is not worth the cost to clarify those needs and create different product or media mixes. Large public institutions often use a mass market strategy to recruit students. Every student, regardless of academic interest or ability, is recruited in the same fashion.

In a concentration strategy, efforts are focused on one segment of a larger market (see No. 2, Figure 6-1), and an appropriate product, price, place, and promotion mix is developed for that segment.

A concentration strategy offers some marketing benefits. For example, because all of its efforts are focused on a single segment of the total market, the institution can

Figure 6-1.
Marketing Mix Strategy

No Segmentation

1. Mass Market Strategy
All target audiences receive the same marketing and media mix.

Segmentation

2. Concentration Strategy
Organization recognizes diverse needs but targets only one segment.

3. Multisegment Strategy
Organization recognizes diverse needs and develops segments for each one.

Source: Schoell and Guiltinan

Table 6-1.
Traditional Segmenting Options

Geographic
Rural
Urban
Suburban
Population density
Permanent
Transient
Geocluster
Demographic
Age
Gender
Race/ethnicity
Education level
Dwelling
City size
Occupation
Family size
Position in life/family cycle
Economic
Social class
Mobility
Household income
Disposable income

conduct the necessary research to ascertain the exact needs and expectations of its target market, then devote itself to meeting those needs. A college or university that specializes in aeronautics such as Embry-Riddle or in cooking such as the Culinary Institute of America uses a concentration strategy.

The major disadvantage of a concentration strategy is obvious: The institution is very dependent on one segment. If that segment diminishes in size, disappears, or has its needs met more effectively elsewhere, you are in trouble.

Finally, a multisegment strategy involves developing a manageable array of product, price, place, and promotion mixes (see No. 3, Figure 6-1) for each definable market segment. By using a multisegment rather than a concentration strategy, the institution is usually able to serve a greater number of potential audiences. Institutions that market themselves programmatically rather than institutionally often use a multisegment strategy. This, however, has one overarching disadvantage—it is possible to spread yourself too thin.

Traditional segments

As you can see from a quick look at the following pages, there are a great number of ways to segment potential target audiences. To compound the problem, there is seldom one best way. Audiences can be segmented via single variables, multiple variables, or different variables depending on where the audiences are in their relationship to the institution.

As colleges and universities consider segmenting options, they often turn to traditional geographic, demographic, and economic variables such as those outlined in Table 6-1.

The application of psychology and sociology has greatly expanded the array of segmenting options to include psychographics, personality descriptors, geodemographic clusters, and even product-usage segments.

Tables 6-2 and 6-3 present segments based on personality descriptors and geodemographic profiles and characteristics drawn from Claritas' PRIZM system.

One of the 62 "neighborhoods" listed in Table 6-2, Kids & Cul-de-sacs, is outlined below and in Table 6-3. As you can see, this profile offers a wide array of insightful data and perspectives.

Cluster 5: Kids & Cul-de-sacs

Near Executive Suites and Pools & Patios in all affluence measures, Cluster 5 is ranked first of the 62 PRIZM clusters in married couples with children and large (more than four-person) families. Because "family" governs its lives and activities, Kids & Cul-de-sacs is a noisy mix of bikes, dogs, carpools, music, and sports.

Additional segmenting possibilities

The segmenting array in Table 6-4, offered by Philip Kotler, focuses on benefits, user status, loyalty status, readiness stage, and attitude toward the institution. Because of these focuses, these segments have great potential for enhancing the effectiveness of

Table 6-2
Personality and Geodemographic Segments

Personality Descriptors	Affectionate Likable Dominating Authoritative	Passive Independent Self-assured Sociable	Stubborn Followers Leaders Conformists	Experimenters Individualists
Geodemography*	Blue-blood Estates Winner's Circle Executive Suites Pools & Patios **Kids & Cul-de-sacs** Urban Gold Coast Money & Brains Young Literati American Dreams Bohemian Mix Second-city Elite Upward Bound Gray Power County Squires God's Country Big Fish, Small Pond	Greenbelt Families Young Influentials New Empty Nests Boomers & Babies Suburban Sprawl Blue-chip Blues Upstarts & Seniors New Beginnings Mobility Blues Gray Collars Urban Achievers Big-city Blend Old Yankee Rows Mid-city Mix Latino America Middleburg Managers	Boomtown Singles Starter Families Sunset-city Blues Towns & Gowns New Homesteaders Middle America Red, White, & Blue Military Quarters Big-sky Families New Ecotopia River City USA Shotguns & Pickups Single-city Blues Hispanic Mix Inner Cities Smalltown	Downtown Hometown Retired Family Scramble Southside City Golden Ponds Rural Industrial Norma Rae-ville Mines & Mills Agribusiness Grain Belt Blue Highways Rustic Elders Back-country Folks Scrub-pine Flats Hard Scrabble

*The 62 clusters outlined in the adjacent columns are drawn from Claritas' PRIZM system. PRIZM is but one of an increasing number of geodemographic clusters. Geodemographic segmenting tools such as Claritas' PRIZM offer tremendous potential for both student recruiting and fund raising. In many respects, they combine the most useful of the geographic, demographic, and psychographic segmenting options.

Table 6-3.
Social Group S1—Elite Suburbs

Predominant characteristics:	
Households (% U.S.):	2,845,800 (3.0%)
Population (% U.S.):	9,032,900 (3.5%)
Demographic caption:	Upscale suburban families
Ethnic diversity:	Dominant white, high Asian
Family type:	Married couples with children
Predominant age ranges:	35-44, 45-54
Education:	College graduates
Employment level:	White-collar/professional
Housing type:	Owner/single unit
Density centile:	57 (1=sparse, 99=dense)
SER/median income:	SER 10/middle $61,600

	U.S.	Cluster	Index
Education:			
4+ years college	20.5	32.0	156
1-3 years college	25.1	32.1	128
High school graduate	29.9	25.1	84
Less than eighth grade	10.2	3.4	34
Occupation:			
Professional/manager	26.6	35.4	133
Other white collar	31.8	36.5	115
Blue collar	26.1	18.3	70
Service	13.1	9.2	70
Farming/mining/ranching	2.4	0.7	28

	U.S.	Cluster	Index
Family type:			
Married couples	28.1	30.5	108
Married couples with children	26.6	44.4	167
Single parents	9.1	6.0	66
Singles (not married)	36.2	19.1	53
Presence of children:			
Under age 6	9.2	10.4	114
Age 6-13	11.6	14.0	121
Age 13-17	5.1	6.0	118
Household with 5+ persons	10.8	15.6	144
Age of population:			
Under 24	10.1	8.7.7	76
25-34	16.2	16.1	100
35-44	15.8	20.8	131
45-54	11.1	12.7	114
55-64	8.1	6.4	79
65+	12.7	5.8	46
Median age	46.5	43.3	93
Race/ancestry:			
White	83.2	86.7	104
Black	12.4	5.6	45
All other races	4.4	7.7	176
Hispanic	9.9	7.2	72
Asian	5.4	11.9	220

student recruiting and fund-raising strategies. The key, of course, is to develop research instruments that allow you to develop these profiles for donors and prospective students.

Similar to Kotler, consultant Bob Topor outlines a behavioral segmenting matrix that includes six stages that a prospective student, donor, or other constituent might be at relative to the institution. His segments, too, have great potential for student recruiting and fund-raising. See Table 6-5.

Topor makes the case that target audiences pass through one or more of these stages and that our job is to identify the stage that most members of the target audience are in and to develop effective communications that will motivate them to take the next step.

Quick Glance

Edge Cities

In 1981, Joel Garreau published *The Nine Nations of North America*. In his book, he divided North America (including Canada and Mexico) into nine fairly distinct geopolitical units: New England, the Foundry, Dixie, the Islands, Mexamerica, the Breadbasket, Ecotopia, the Empty Quarter, and Quebec. Garreau's book offers a fascinating and still current look at how America is segmented.

In 1995, Garreau published *Edge City*, in which he asserts that it is to edge cities, not cities and not suburbs, that Americans flock.

Viable segments for students and donors

The tables already cited offer a potentially dizzying array of segmenting options and ideas. However, with an eye to practicality, let's focus for a moment on the two audiences of critical interest to colleges and universities: prospective students and donors. See Table 6-6.

Determining whether a segmenting strategy is viable

Not every college or university should undertake a segmenting strategy. Schoell and Guiltinan offer five questions that must be addressed to determine whether creating a segmenting strategy is a sound idea for a particular institution.

1. *Are the characteristics and needs of target audiences—students, donors, and others—heterogeneous?*
   If the target market is homogenous, then one marketing mix is sufficient and a segmenting strategy is usually not necessary. However, the more divergent the characteristics and needs of a target audience, the more useful a segmenting strategy will become.
2. *Can segments be defined and evaluated in terms of relative attractiveness?*
   Not only must target audiences be diverse, but they must be diverse in obvious and measurable ways. For example, if you are recruiting prospective students, it is often wise to have separate recruiting strategies for traditional-age students, students of color, and nontraditional students. And in actuality, it is wise to examine the composition of your pool of students of color. Chances are that pool can be refined, or segmented even more.
3. *Is there at least one segment in the larger target audience large enough to warrant creating a separate segmenting strategy?*
   Unless your research identifies at least one segment that is large enough to be served profitably, there is little reason to develop a segmenting strategy.
4. *Can the segments be reached by developing a marketing and media mix that will respond to segments' needs?*
   If the research identifies one or more market segments, the next challenge is to develop an appropriate marketing mix (the four Ps) and media mix (how

the four Ps are communicated). Generally, a separate marketing mix—and often a separate media mix—is created for each major segment. The college or university must possess the resolve, the resources, and the capabilities to mix and communicate the four Ps in an effective and timely fashion.

5. *Will the segments be responsive to the marketing mix developed for them?* If a segmenting strategy is to prove practical, the first question should be answered "no" while the remaining questions should be answered "yes."

Developing an effective segmenting strategy

For the most part, there are seven steps to the creation of an effective segmenting strategy:

- Make a commitment to a multisegment marketing strategy.
- Analyze the marketplace and the target audiences you now serve.
- Develop a list of potential segments.
- Create a marketing mix for chosen segments.
- Refine marketing and product mixes.
- Develop a communication grid.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the segmentation strategy.

Make a commitment to a multisegment marketing strategy

The decision to move away from a mass market strategy to a multisegment strategy is a bold one, and it should be made carefully. On the downside, multisegment recruiting and fund-raising strategies will require more resources—of time, computers, expertise, and money. It will also require ongoing research and more institutional flexibility. However, multisegment strategies have a significant upside: They are more effective and efficient than a mass market strategy. Segmenting may sometimes be burdensome, but done correctly, it can become one of the most important tools in the marketer's arsenal.

Analyze the marketplace and target audiences you now serve

The second step in the segmenting process is to analyze your marketplace and the target audiences you currently serve.

As you look at the marketplace, ask yourself:

- Is its infrastructure (jobs and the economy) growing? If so, at what rate?
- Is it competitive? What colleges and universities are already serving it? Are they using a multisegment strategy?
- What is our image in the marketplace? How are we known? How well are we known? How are we compared with other institutions?
- With what institutions and entities do we compete for prospective students and donated dollars?

As you look at your target audiences, ask yourself:

- Are there enough prospective students in the marketplace to justify segmentation?

Table 6-4
Psychographic, Attitudinal, and Motivational Segments

Benefits sought
Academic quality
Job skills
Social life
User status
Nonuser
Ex-user
Potential user
First-time user
Regular user
Completed user
Loyalty status
None
Medium
Strong
Absolute
Switcher
Readiness stage
Unaware
Aware
Informed
Interested
Desirous
Intend to apply/donate
Attitude toward institution
Enthusiastic
Positive
Indifferent
Negative
Hostile

Table 6-5
Relationship Segments

Cognitive
Awareness
Knowledge
Affective
Liking
Preference
Conviction
Behavioral
Commitment

- Do prospective students have the ability to pay?
- Are prospective donors interested in our institution's mission and vision?

Create a list of potential segments

Because there are far more segments in a population than you can adequately serve, it is very important to clarify and refine your list of potential audience segments. As we have discussed, segmentation works best when you can identify common needs and expectations. And though there are several criteria you must consider as you evaluate the viability of potential segments, the following are minimums:

- You must be able to quantify the segments effectively.
- The segments must be accessible.
- The segments must be large enough to justify your expenditures.
- The segments must be nonvariable and sustainable over time.
- The needs of each segment must be undermet.

Numerical goals

As early in the segmenting process as possible, you must set numerical goals to help gauge the efficacy of potential segments. For student recruiting, numerical goals might include:

- The number of student segments
- The number of prospective students in each segment
- How much money it will require you to meet your recruiting goal for each segment
- How much revenue each student segment will generate for the institution
- How each type of student will affect student-support services
- How many students in each segment are likely to persist

For fund raising, numerical goals might include:

- The number of donor segments
- How many donors will be in each segment
- The amount of revenue each segment will contribute
- How much it will cost to raise each dollar from each segment
- The number or percentage of each segment that is likely to convert to a higher level of giving

For student recruiting, potential segments might include:

- Traditional residential students
- Full- and fuller-pay students
- Women or men students
- Students of color
- Students from a particular denomination
- Talented and gifted
- In-state and out-of-state students
- Students for specific majors that you are trying to grow

Table 6-6.
Segmentation Options for Prospective Students and Donors

Students	**Donors**
Demographic	*Demographic*
Age	Age
Gender	Gender
Ethnicity	Ethnicity
Academic profile (high school GPA, test scores)	
Academic interest	
Type of high school	
Geographic	*Geographic*
Distance from the institution	Distance from the institution
City, suburban, edge city, rural	City, suburban, edge city, rural
In state, out of state	
International	
Economic	*Economic*
Household income	Household income
Ability to pay	Disposable income
Need level	Tax status/rate
	Access to other dollars
Behavioral & psychographic	*Behavioral & psychographic*
Willingness to pay	Relationship to institution
Propensity to attend a specific type of college or university	Relationship to other donors
	Stage in life cycle
Motivation for attending college	Giving history
Postgraduation goals	Values, attitudes, and lifestyles
Family college-attendance pattern	Geodemographic cluster
Relationship to institution	
Values, attitudes, and lifestyle	
Geodemographic cluster	

For fund raising, potential segments might include:

- Alumni
- Trustees
- Faculty and staff
- Major donors
- Estate planners
- Foundations
- Corporate donors

Begin with a small rollout

Your initial list of recruiting and fund-raising segments should be fairly small. If you attempt to develop distinct marketing mixes for more than two or three segments, you will almost certainly be overwhelmed by the complexities and the drain on your resources. It is much better to begin small and add segments as you gain expertise and are more clearly able to evaluate results.

Create a marketing mix for each segment

The next step is carefully developing an appropriate marketing mix for each segment. This involves determining how the potential segments perceive you, gathering positioning and comparative data where appropriate, and identifying the benefits most attractive to each segment.

As you read in Chapter 5, image has a significant impact on decision-making; people, including students, are predisposed to institutions with which they are already familiar. It is very important to undertake legitimate image research. This will greatly affect the quality of the ensuing communications strategies.

While gathering data about how these market segments already perceive you, it is good to gather positional and comparative data. You must learn how students and donors position you in the marketplace and how they compare you with other, often competing, institutions.

While gathering image, positional, and comparative data, it is also important to gather benefit data—the needs and expectations of prospective students and donors. Often, these needs and expectations can be tied to the four Ps—product, price, place, and promotion.

Let's assume, for example, that we ask students of high academic ability, students of average academic ability, and parents to review the following list of 40 college-choice characteristics:

- Academic reputation of the institution
- Religious reputation of the institution
- Availability of specific programs or majors
- Recommendation of college guidebooks such as *Peterson's*
- Recommendation of such magazines as *U.S. News & World Report*
- Cost to attend (before financial aid)
- Cost to attend (after financial aid)
- Availability of scholarships
- Teaching emphasis
- Research emphasis
- Opportunity to be taught by faculty vs. graduate assistants
- Guaranteed undergraduate degree in four years
- Quality of the faculty
- Academic quality of students
- Student access to faculty
- Quality of academic/teaching facilities
- Availability of three-year undergraduate degree programs
- Quality of academic advising
- Quality of career counseling
- Academic support for underprepared students
- Support for students who are unsure about a major
- Job placement record

Quick Glance

Programmatic Marketing for Student Recruiting

One extraordinary variation on the use of segmentation for student recruiting is the use of programmatic marketing. In programmatic marketing, certain academic majors are marketed and promoted more heavily than others. In many respects, programmatic marketing is not true segmentation because it begins not with the target audience but with the product. However, it remains an extremely powerful approach to student recruiting.

- Graduate school placement record
- Opportunity to conduct research as an undergraduate
- Variety and quality of internship programs
- Opportunity to study abroad
- Computer and Internet availability in residence halls
- Ethnic diversity of the student body
- Proximity to a large city
- Geographic location
- Leadership opportunities on campus
- Friendliness of the campus
- Beauty of the campus
- Safety of the campus
- Opportunity to hold a job while attending college
- Quality of residence life
- The fact that someone I know attends the institution
- Availability and quality of recreational facilities
- Extracurricular clubs and activities

Quick Glance

Defining Benefit Segments

Benefit must be defined from the perspective and interest of the target audiences, not the institution. The target audience must automatically recognize the value of the benefit. If it doesn't, the "benefit" is not a benefit from its perspective. Don't waste time trying to convince students or donors that something is a benefit—either they will recognize it immediately or they will not.

After they have reviewed the list, we ask each group to indicate which five of the 39 characteristics are most important to them. The results are shown in Table 6-7.

How the three target audiences order their college-choice characteristics should offer significant insight into how you refine your product and message-mix strategies.

The same strategy can be used for donors. Through research it is possible to test quickly all case statements, appeals, and means of solicitation.

Table 6-7
Top Five College Choice Characteristics

Students of high academic ability	Students of average academic ability	Parents
1. Academic reputation	Friendliness	Safety
2. Quality of faculty	Safety	Academic reputation
3. Availability of specific majors	Availability of specific majors	Cost
4. Cost	Cost	Job placement record
5. Graduate school placement	Academic reputation	Location

Refine marketing and product mixes

After you have gathered image-perception and product-mix data, it is time to refine your marketing and product mixes.

Remember, your marketing mix depends heavily on the four Ps—product, price, place, and promotion. You may find that some target audiences are keenly interested in your product and far less concerned about place or promotion. Some will focus intently on place. Others will be extremely price-sensitive. The only way to know how to develop a correct marketing mix is to ask each audience segment. Table 6-8 offers some potential mix strategies and options.

How target audiences perceive and value the mix is also important. Each different audience may expect a product with different emphases. Students, for instance, are often interested in different aspects of an institution than are their parents, and alumni donors are often interested in different aspects than are major donors. Table 6-9 is an oversimplification of how one college might mix aspects of its product.

Table 6-8
Product, Price, Place, and Promotion Mixes

Product Mixes	Price Mixes	Place Mixes	Promotion Mixes
Academic	Gross cost	Single campus	Word-of-mouth communication
Social	Net cost	Satellite campus	Direct mail/publications
Physical	Ability to pay	WWW/Internet	Telemarketing
Spiritual	Willingness to pay	Travel abroad	Advertising (newspaper, magazine, radio, TV)
Reputational	Type of financial aid - merit-based - need-based	Day classes	Transit/outdoor
Value (cost vs. benefits)	Composition of aid package - scholarship/grant - loan - work-study	Evening classes	Electronic (video, audio, CDs, WWW, Internet)
		Weekend classes	Media relations Public relations Special events

Note: There is some debate about where time issues fit in the marketing mix. Some address time in the product mix. Others associate time with place. It really doesn't matter as long as time issues are addressed somewhere in the marketing mix.

Table 6-9.
Possible Product-Mix Emphases At One Institution

Target Audience	Product-mix Emphases
Prospective students	Strong emphasis on academics and social life
Parents	Stronger emphasis on academics, less emphasis on social life
Young alumni donors	Less emphasis on academics and stronger emphasis on social life and athletics
Older alumni donors	Increasing emphasis on academics
Major donors	Stronger emphasis on academics

Of course, the key to creating an effective product mix is to conduct research to determine the expectations of your target audiences and then mix the product within the range of possibilities established by your mission and vision.

Though there are several criteria for determining which academic programs are most suitable for programmatic marketing, the following are particularly useful:

- The program has unused capacity.
- The program has high operating and overhead costs.
- The program is unique, not offered by competing colleges or universities.
- The program has potential for high visibility in the marketplace.
- The program has natural links to the surrounding community.
- Graduation from the program leads to success in graduate school or high-income jobs.

Develop a communication grid

The next step in the segmentation process is to develop a communication grid that outlines potential message and communication strategies for each segment. Specifically, the grid addresses the following areas:

- Audience segment
- Benefits/attributes the target audience segment values most
- Liabilities perceived by the audience segment
- Communication options

The use of a communication grid, as in Table 6-10, will help you keep track of the major messages and media for each segment.

A similar grid, as in Table 6-11, may be established for donors.

Evaluate effectiveness of segmenting strategy

Because you carefully defined your recruiting and fund-raising goals, it should be fairly straightforward to evaluate your response: Either you met your goals or you did

Table 6-10.
Communication Grid: Prospective Students

Audience Segment	Benefits/Attributes	Liabilities	Communication Options
Traditional/residential students	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Talented and gifted students	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Female students	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Engineering students	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.

Table 6-11.
Communication Grid: Donors

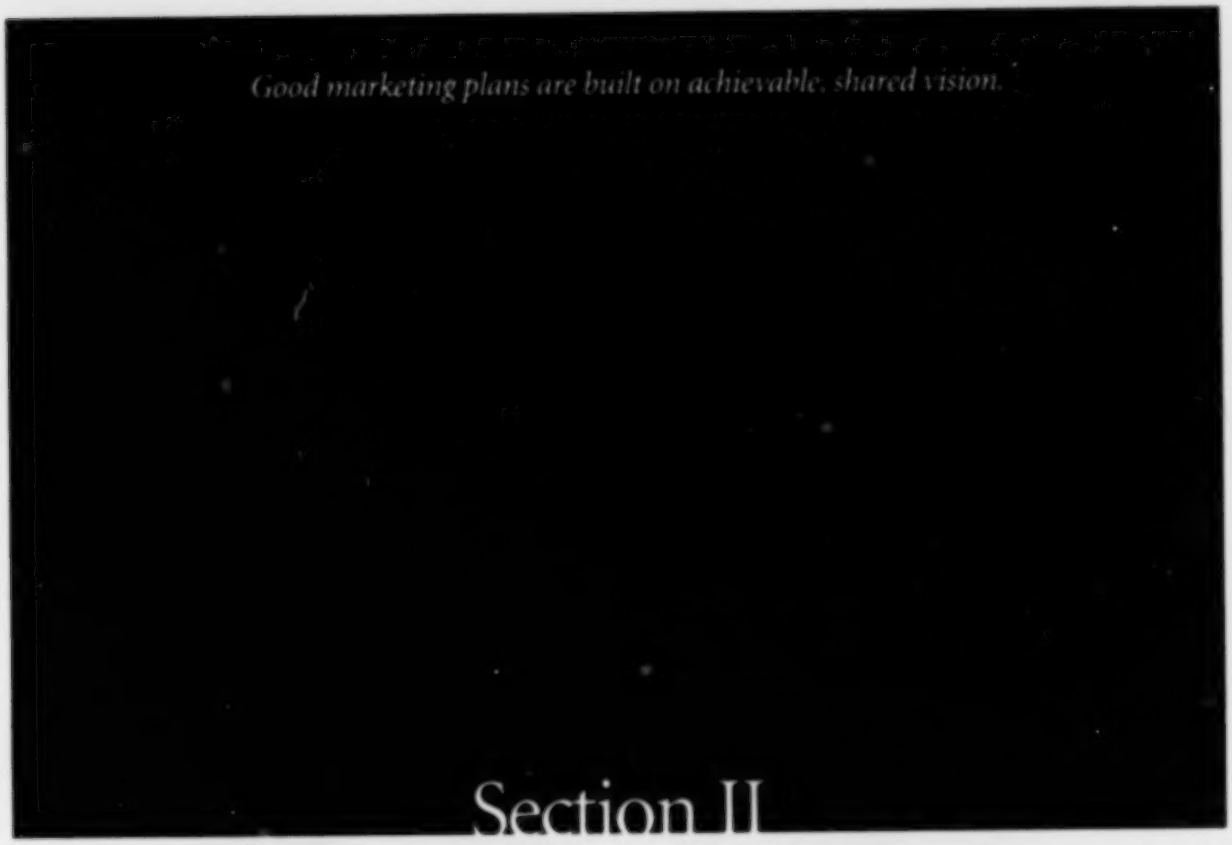
Audience Segment	Benefits/Attributes	Liabilities	Communication Options
Alumni	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Major Donors	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.
Corporate Donors	1.	1.	1.
	2.	2.	2.
	3.	3.	3.

Quick Glance

A Research Base for Segmentation

A sound segmenting strategy is based on research, not speculation and hope. Throughout this chapter I have stressed that the evaluation of potential audience segments; the clarification of benefits, attributes, and liabilities; the creation of product mixes; and the determination of communication options all require solid, quantitative research. Without research as a foundation, a segmenting strategy will probably fail.

not. However, determining why may be a bit problematic. If you failed to meet a goal, why not? Or if you greatly surpassed a goal, why? Careful determination will offer you tremendous insight into how you might improve the performance and effectiveness of your marketing strategies. Take the time to answer the question "why."



Section II

The Marketing Planning Process

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> **"Plans are nothing. Planning is everything."**
> —Dwight Eisenhower

The Marketing Planning Process

Section I of this book was designed to help you develop a thorough understanding of marketing principles, tools, and techniques. Section II will help you use the tools and techniques presented in Section I to write your own marketing plan. Where Section I was theoretical and even a bit philosophical, Section II is decidedly practical.

To help organize what might at first be perceived as a daunting undertaking, Section II is divided into three chapters:

- Building the Foundation
- Writing the Plan
- Execution and Evaluation

These three chapters are organized around a series of steps that will help move you carefully yet deliberately through the planning process. These steps are presented in Table II-1.

Table II-1
Steps for Creating a Marketing Plan

Building the Foundation	Writing the Plan	Execution and Evaluation
Empower the process	Undertake a situational analysis	Execute the plan
Clarify your purpose	Make decision on research	Evaluate and modify the plan
Designate a champion	Finalize SWOT	Conduct a planning postmortem
Assemble the marketing team	Settle on vivid descriptors	
Build the team	Establish the marketing goals	
Define planning relationships and terminology	Clarify target audiences	
Affirm the unchangeable	Write marketing action plans	
Establish range of possibilities	Finalize the budget	
Make the decision to stay inside or go outside	Debug the plan	
Outline the planning process		

Why this approach

This multistep process was developed for several reasons. First, these steps outline the major and some often-overlooked minor issues that must be addressed as part of the planning process.

Second, these steps are sequential—they lend an order to the planning process. Rather than a large, complex, and often amorphous undertaking, the process is presented as a series of smaller, more easily defined and understood activities. This is especially important to people, teams, and organizations that begin the process without a thorough understanding of marketing.

Third, these steps emphasize the gathering of pertinent data at the beginning of the planning process where it will do the most good. Good plans are built on good data.

Fourth, these steps are designed to promote careful synthesis and debate. At the same time, they are designed to move you beyond prolonged synthesis and debate.

Next, these steps are designed to spread ownership among internal and external target audiences. And finally, these steps will keep you moving forward. Although debate and discussion are important parts of the process, our goal is to develop an effective comprehensive plan as quickly as possible.

Overview of the section

The section opens with Chapter 7, which covers building the foundation. One of the most comprehensive and lengthy chapters of the book, Chapter 7 will explore the issues that need to be addressed and the tasks that need to be accomplished before you can begin to write the plan. The 10 steps addressed in this chapter will show you how to empower the marketing process, choose a marketing champion, build a marketing team, and explore the relationship between marketing and strategic planning. Chapter 7 will conclude by introducing the planning process that the remainder of the book will follow.

Chapter 8 will move you, step by step, through the planning process outlined at the close of Chapter 7. It will begin with the situational or institutional analysis, discuss the creation of your SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), move through goal-setting and the definition of target audiences, and conclude with writing a marketing action plan, budgeting, and debugging the plan.

Chapter 9 will wrap up the planning process by addressing three important topics: plan execution, ongoing evaluation, and the need to conduct a planning postmortem so future plans might benefit from the planning process you will soon undertake.

The importance of sequence

Each step in the planning process is designed to address a specific component of the planning process. Some of the steps will require you to gather information and complete worksheets. Others will force synthesis and appraisal. Many will require you to set priorities among options and opportunities. Some, such as Step 7, will be simple reminders not to overlook something important. And although individual steps may appear disparate at times, they have a common thread—to move you carefully through the planning process.

Before completing any of these steps, I encourage you to read all of Section II. This will help you achieve greater perspective on, and understanding of, the whole process. After you have read all the steps, the logic, order, and necessity behind individual steps will be more apparent.

7

> "... I'm not laying bricks, I'm building a cathedral."
>
> —16th-century bricklayer

Building the Foundation

It is very difficult to hide a poor foundation. If the foundation is not solid, thoughtful, and true, sooner or later it will fail. And the structure that is built on this foundation, no matter how great or ornate, will crack, shift, distort, and perhaps even crumble.

The importance of a solid foundation is not limited to buildings. The analogy is also appropriate for the planning process. If you set about writing a plan without building a solid foundation, your marketing plan, too, will likely fail.

The purpose of this chapter is to help you build that foundation. It deliberately introduces and addresses topics that many marketing planners might ordinarily overlook. My purpose here is simple: to help you create a marketing plan that is on target, on track, and supported by the larger campus community.

Building the foundation

The 10 steps outlined in Table 7-1 will help you build the foundation you need to move ahead with certainty and confidence.

Let's begin by examining each step in detail. Remember, it is important and helpful to read through all the steps outlined in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 to gain an overview of the entire process before undertaking individual steps.

A quick reminder: As you read through these steps, notice how they stress two

Table 7-1.
Building the Foundation

1. Empower the process.
2. Clarify your purpose.
3. Designate a champion.
4. Assemble the marketing team.
5. Build the team.
6. Define planning relationships and terminology.
7. Affirm the unchangeables.
8. Establish the range of possibilities.
9. Decide whether to stay inside or go outside.
10. Outline the planning process.

important goals—the need to gather valid data early in the planning process and the need to create campus-wide ownership of the process and resulting plan.

Step 1: Empower the process

Empowering the marketing planning process begins with the active commitment of the president, or a very senior administrator with the backing of the president, to writing a marketing plan.

This commitment takes several forms. Foremost, it is a commitment to affirm the viability of the institution's mission. It is also a commitment to creating and communicating a strong, compelling institutional vision.

Second, it is a commitment to spend time, money, talent, and political capital on marketing. You simply cannot proceed in creating a marketing plan without this commitment.

Third, it is a commitment to make tough decisions—to change institutional priorities and remove organizational stumbling blocks and territorial imperatives that hinder the marketing planning process.

And finally, it is a commitment to choose a champion and empower both the team leader and the overall team.

Commitment is spelled $

A long time ago, my father and I talked about how organizations demonstrate commitment. He said that while mission statements were helpful, a better and often more realistic sense of commitment could come from a look at the budget. My dad was right. Commitment to the marketing planning process must include the commitment to spend dollars, often very contested dollars, first for the creation of a plan and later for short- and long-term implementation.

Often I hear presidents or senior administrators say, "Go ahead and write the plan, and we'll talk about funding it after it's done." However, when the plan is finished, the dollars more often than not never materialize. I have learned from experience that if the president is not willing to give you a firm idea of the dollars available for marketing at the outset of the planning process, you should seriously consider her or his commitment to marketing. Remember, for your own credibility, you cannot afford to be part of a process that makes promises to the organization's stakeholders and then fails to deliver.

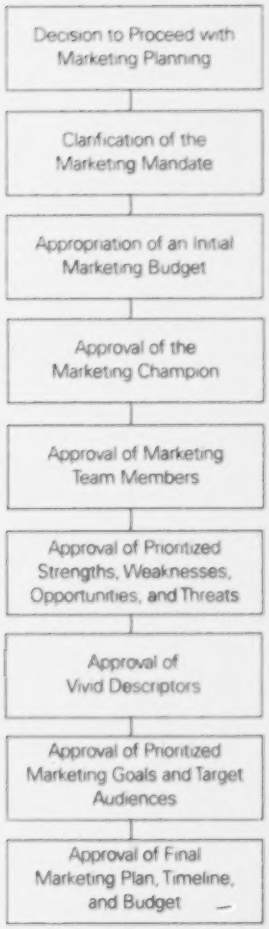
Knowing the initial level of support is important for another reason—it helps define the range of possibilities. If the institution can afford to spend only $20,000 a year for five years, the marketing plan will be more modest than if the institution can spend $200,000 a year for five years.

Before you begin, make sure the president has committed the necessary resources. Remember, commitment is spelled with a $.

The presidential role in the planning process

Though the president may or may not be involved in the actual writing of the marketing plan, his or her role is still pivotal. As Figure 7-1 indicates, the president is involved in all key decisions beginning with the determination to proceed with marketing; the initial commitment of dollars; the selection of the marketing champion and team; and the establishment of the marketing goals, target audiences, and action plans. The marketing planning process outlined in these pages recognizes and supports the involvement of the president.

Figure 7-1.
Decision Points for the President


Decision to Proceed with Marketing Planning
Clarification of the Marketing Mandate
Appropriation of an Initial Marketing Budget
Approval of the Marketing Champion
Approval of Marketing Team Members
Approval of Prioritized Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
Approval of Vivid Descriptors
Approval of Prioritized Marketing Goals and Target Audiences
Approval of Final Marketing Plan, Timeline, and Budget

Step 2: Clarify your purpose

The second step in the planning process is to clarify why you want to create a marketing plan in the first place. The rationale is simple: If you don't have a clear understanding of why you are planning, it will be difficult to sell the process to the campus community. Most staff, administrators, and faculty are already burdened by more tasks than they can reasonably accomplish, and they will resist unless they can clearly see and appreciate, from their perspective, why it is being undertaken.

Other questions, too, will help clarify your purpose and spread ownership. It is often useful to ask these questions of all stakeholders, both internal and external, that might be directly affected by the planning process and the implementation of the marketing plan.

- What are the most significant marketing challenges our institution faces?
- What marketing opportunities are before us?
- Why are we interested in creating a marketing plan?
- What do we perceive as the benefits to writing a plan?
- What are our biggest concerns about writing a plan?

You should try to establish your needs as clearly and early in the process as possible. One college sends a newsletter out to campus audiences twice each year. Part of that newsletter includes a recurring article on "threats" that the college is facing. Faculty, staff, administrators, and even students are reminded that their marketplace is perilous and changing. Another institution places similar information on its internal computer bulletin boards. Keep in mind that the greater the number of stakeholders that recognize the legitimacy of the need to write a marketing plan, the less internal resistance you will meet.

It is often helpful to define your needs before you designate your marketing champion and select your team. The needs and problems your institution faces may affect whom you choose as champion and whom you invite to join your marketing team.

Step 3: Designate a champion

The next step is for the president to designate a champion, a single person responsible for the overall planning process.

Long ago I learned a fundamental lesson: Group accountability is no accountability. Every endeavor, every undertaking, every process must have someone, some single person, in charge. For our purposes, that person is the champion.

There are four essential characteristics of a strong marketing champion. First, she or he must have the respect of the campus community. Second, the champion must have both a theoretical and an experiential understanding of marketing. Third, the champion must have power and clout or access to power and clout. And finally, the champion must be able to lead and motivate people.

> **"The marketing champion must be empowered with a clear mandate."**

A strong marketing champion is important for several reasons:

- The variables that affect an institution's marketing efforts cross so many departmental and divisional lines that the only way to avoid turf battles is to have a strong champion actively involved.
- A respected champion will help spread ownership.
- Because many marketing issues are related to policy and strategic planning, the marketing champion must be closely related to the institution's policy-making body.
- Because marketing depends on appropriate funding, the champion—and by extension the president—must be able to authorize the reallocation of funds to support the marketing effort.

The marketing champion has one important task that must be highlighted: to serve as the interface or liaison between the marketing team and the institution's senior administrative staff, including the president.

At the outset, the marketing champion must be empowered with a clear and demonstrated mandate from the president. This will send an important message to the campus and increase the status and stature of the marketing effort. This is especially important because the marketing champion is often called to mediate between different power and organizational structures on campus.

A strong marketing champion also fulfills two other roles. She or he galvanizes and legitimizes your marketing efforts and provides accountability to the larger campus community.

There is a temptation—often a very strong one—to put the assistant of this or that in charge of the planning process. This is almost always a mistake, and most plans never recover from this error. If the planning process does not warrant the attention of a true champion, the institution is not serious enough about marketing.

While working with and through the marketing team, there are two skill sets the champion will depend on most—being a leader and being a delegator.

The champion as leader

The marketing champion is the team leader. It is her or his responsibility to set the tone and timbre of group interaction and dynamics. Of particular importance is the

champion's need to lead the team. Glenn Parker, writing in *Cross-Functional Teams: Working with Allies, Enemies, and Other Strangers*, notes that a team is an eclectic group with a variety of backgrounds, priorities, and interests—people who, given a choice, probably wouldn't work with one another.

This is often a valid description of a marketing team, and for the team to be successful, the champion must exhibit what Parker calls process skills, including these:

- Asking questions that will generate ideas and stimulate discussion
- Paraphrasing and using other listening skills to promote effective communication
- Managing discussions so that unassertive members will contribute ideas, outspoken members don't take over, and you can show that you value each person's input
- Creating a climate where members feel comfortable expressing their views
- Helping to reach decisions through consensus
- Involving all members in setting goals
- Ensuring that team members show respect to one another
- Celebrating accomplishments
- Motivating team members through recognition, job assignments, and other techniques

The champion as delegator

As important as the champion as leader is the champion as delegator. Few tactics for team-building are more efficient and effective than delegation. Delegation allows the champion to focus on the tasks that he or she can best complete, and the increased responsibility and recognition empower team members and bond them more tightly to the planning process.

There are several good books and articles on delegation. Robert Nelson's *Empowering Employees Through Delegation* is particularly helpful because it looks at delegation not simply as a way to reduce your workload but as an important strategy to empower those to whom you are delegating.

Nelson outlines several checklists and guides that are worth reviewing, including this delegation-planning checklist:

1. Develop a good attitude.
   - Give up some control.
   - Take risks.
   - Trust your team members.
   - Stay calm and patient.

2. Decide what to delegate.
   - Delegate whenever possible.
   - Delegate to both experienced and inexperienced employees.
   - Consider skill, motivation, and workload.

3. Select the right person.
   - Match skills and interests with tasks.
   - Motivate your employees.

4. Communicate responsibilities to team members.
   - Set and prioritize clear goals.
   - Share possible pitfalls.
   - Set performance standards.

5. Grant the appropriate level of authority.
   - Decide how much to give.
   - Inform team members of their authority.

6. Provide the appropriate level of support.
   - Tell the team what each member is doing.
   - Let your team know how and when you can help.
   - Share your resources.

7. Monitor the delegation.
   - Record employees' progress.
   - Ask for feedback on how you're delegating.

8. Evaluate the delegation.
   - Compare results with goals.
   - Evaluate the employee's role.
   - Discuss and give feedback.

The champion as leader and the champion as delegator are essential components of the marketing team.

Step 4: Assemble the marketing team

The selection of a strong marketing champion is the necessary first step. However, the champion cannot act alone—there must be a team.

Like the champion, the marketing team has several important tasks. The team must

- Oversee the planning process;
- Interface with the larger campus community and external stakeholders;
- Gather data and insight from internal and external sources;
- Clarify issues and options before the institution;
- Make preliminary decisions;
- Spread ownership of the marketing planning process;
- Oversee implementation of the plan; and

- Monitor and evaluate the plan and plan activities at key junctures.

Who should be on the team . . . and yes, it is a team

Generally the question at this point is "who should be on the marketing team?" Although there is no single, universal answer, some guidelines provide direction. However, before we go on to discuss team composition, note that we have been calling this a marketing team rather than a marketing committee. This word choice was not accidental. All of us have been bamboozled into sitting on committees whose sole function seemed to be to meet, eat doughnuts, and generate lengthy and ultimately unacted-on reports. Second only to "task force," the term "committee" has way too much emotional, often negative, baggage in the academy.

This is one reason we use the term "team." The second, and perhaps more important, is because the creation of a marketing plan involves a true team effort—individuals working together with a unified goal in mind.

Organizational charts, titles, offices, and capabilities

It is difficult to discuss the exact composition of individual marketing teams because colleges and universities are neither organized the same way nor face the same challenges and opportunities. Institutions are rarely optimally organized from a marketing perspective. Half the marketing-related functions report to the advancement side, some to the president's office, others to the academic dean.

"We need to look beyond titles and organizational charts..."

At some institutions, public relations includes community and media relations. At others, public relations is called public affairs. Some institutions have a separate marketing function. Many do not (at least not yet) have one at all. Sophisticated institutions have a separate donor relations function. Others have government or legislative relations.

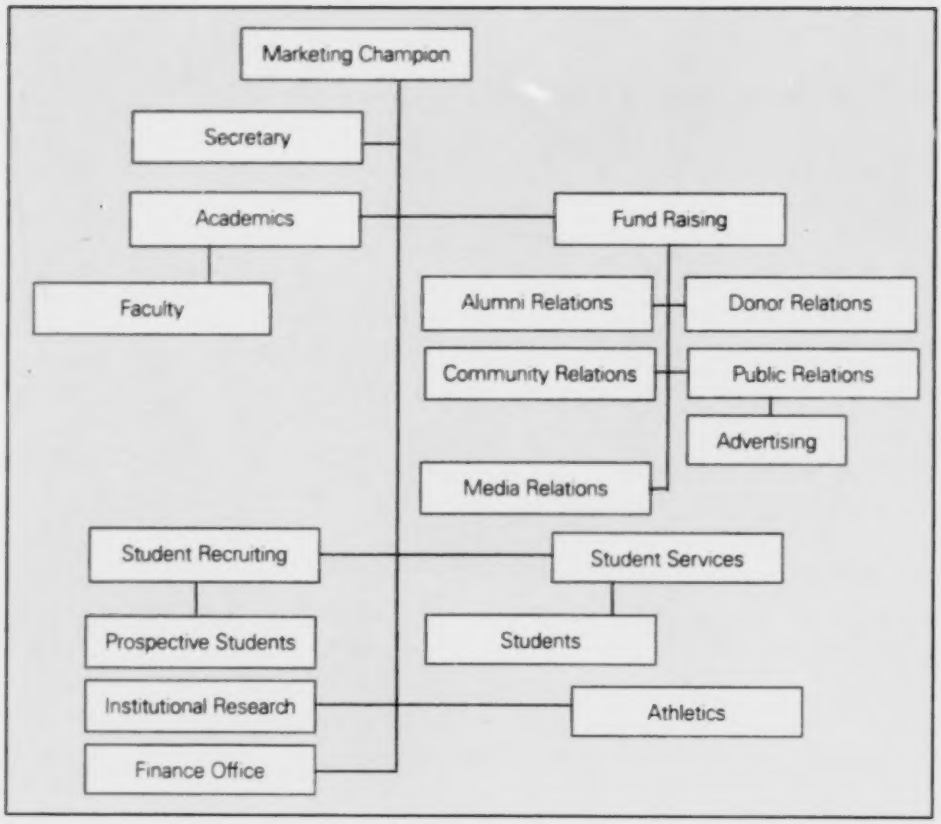
Organizing the team

It does not really matter how you are organized or what you call what you do. If you spend all your time trying to chase down every dotted, solid, and straight line in every possible organizational chart, I fear that any hopes of real progress will be lost. Rather than positions and titles, let's focus on principles, philosophies, and outcomes. It does not matter what you call public relations as long as some people at your institution are charged with that responsibility. Nor does it matter who they report to. We need to look beyond titles and organizational charts and concentrate on involving essential capabilities and functions in the planning process and in implementing and monitoring the marketing plan.

While the exact composition of the marketing team will change depending on the president's mandate, most marketing teams include someone (or more) from the following areas:

- Public relations
- Recruiting and admissions
- Academics/faculty

Figure 7-2.
Composition of the Marketing Team



- Student services
- Fund raising
- Athletics
- Institutional research
- Finance office

Figure 7-2 shows how a typical marketing team might be organized. As you set about selecting people for the team, keep in mind its two most important functions:

- to gather insight and information from internal constituencies and the larger campus community, and
- to spread ownership of the planning process and the resulting plan.

Figure 7-3 shows the relationship between the team and its internal and external constituencies.

Marketing-team members

Before we proceed with the next step in the planning process, let's take a few minutes to examine the role and function of individual team members.

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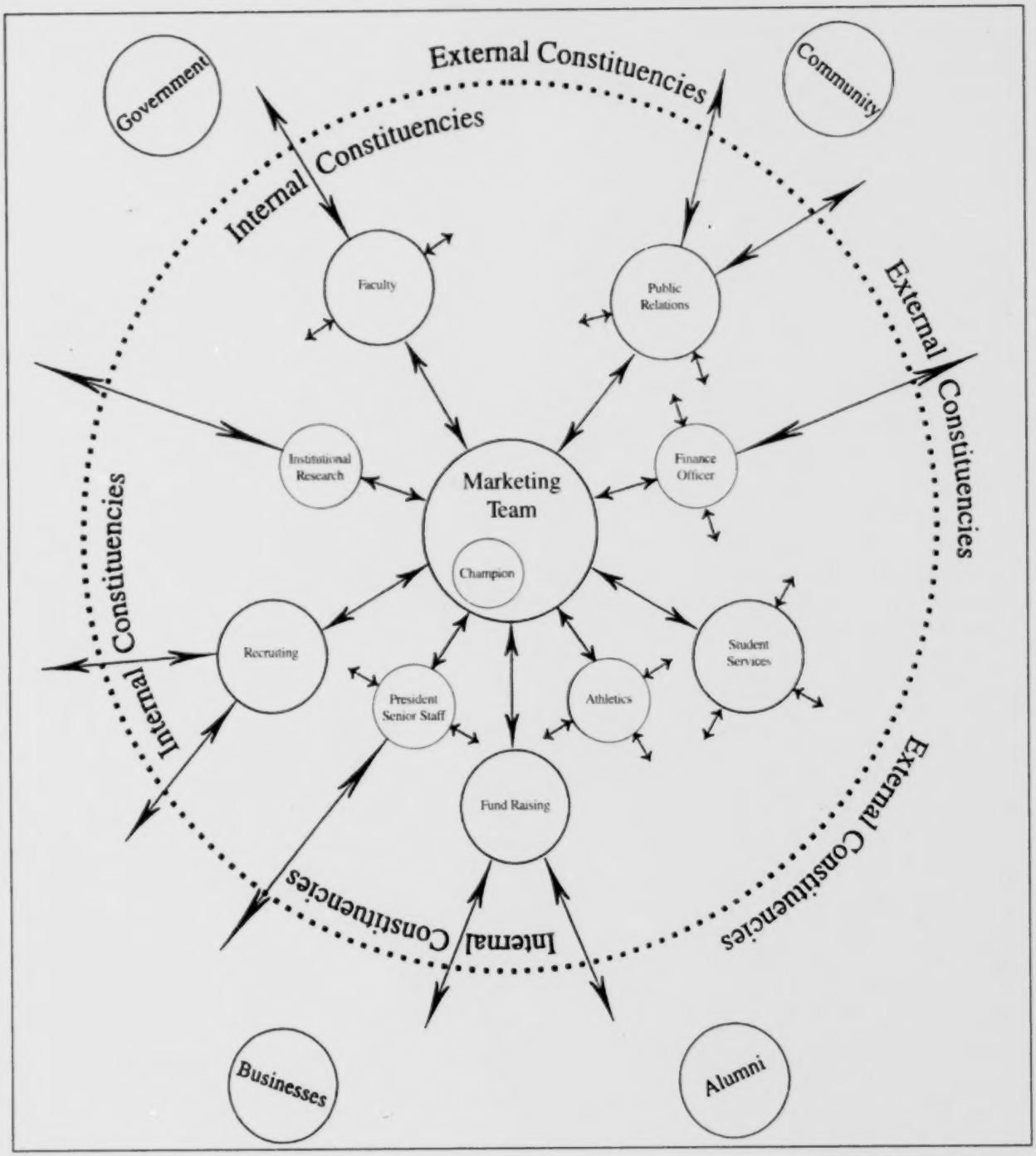

Figure 7-3.
Relationship Between Team and Constituencies

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Table 7-2
Constituencies With Whom the Champion Communicates

Internal Staff
President
Senior administrators

External Constituencies
Trustees
Key external opinion leaders and influentials

The champion

In most but not all cases, the champion is drawn from recruiting or advancement for the simple reason that these people generally have a greater understanding of and appreciation for not only marketing but the marketplace and its dynamics.

Once in a while the champion may be drawn from the faculty. This will work if the faculty member has all four of the characteristics of a champion and ample time.

Like all members of the marketing team, the champion is responsible for communicating with and managing the involvement of internal and external constituencies. For the champion, these constituencies include those in Table 7-2.

Secretary

Because of the great volume of information that will flow to and through the marketing team, it is helpful to have a secretary. This person may be a contributing member of the team or a clerical assistant recruited or appointed to serve. Ideally, this person should report directly to the champion.

The secretary is the chief recorder and document specialist. He or she is responsible for recording the minutes from each meeting; collecting, organizing, and distributing materials; handling correspondence; coordinating meetings and schedules; and generally keeping things under control. In most cases, the secretary is responsible for assembling and formatting the final, written plan.

The secretary should have one other important skill—the ability to keep confidences.

Table 7-3.
Constituencies With Whom the PR Representative Communicates

Internal Staff
Public relations staff
Community relations staff
Media relations staff
Marketing staff
Advertising staff

External Constituencies
Community Residents
Business leaders
Opinion leaders
Media

Public relations

The marketing team must include a representative from the PR office. This person must communicate with and gather insight and data from those constituencies listed in Table 7-3.

This involves assessing the perceptions, needs, and expectations of internal and external constituencies and involving staff in creating and executing action plans from their areas.

Table 7-4.
Constituencies With Whom the Fund-raising Representative Communicates

Internal Staff
Fund-raising staff
Alumni staff
Special events staff

External Constituencies
Donors
Alumni
Foundations

Academic representative

A strong academic representative is critical. Just as the team champion is responsible for interacting with senior administrators, the faculty representative must serve as a liaison with other faculty.

No one discipline necessarily offers the best faculty representatives to the marketing team. Contrary to popular notion, business faculty bring no essential skill set to the planning process. Rather, faculty who serve best in this role have a varied set of skills and attributes, including being

- Perceived by other faculty as honorable and trustworthy
- Able to consider all faculty needs—not just those of their department
- Able to understand and appreciate all faculty ranks and categories including part-time and adjunct

- Knowledgeable of the institution and its history
- Knowledgeable of other institutions
- Knowledgeable of the institution's obstacles and opportunities
- Sensitive to students and their needs

After working with a number of faculty over the years, I have noticed other skills and attributes often found in the best faculty representatives:

- They must be willing to examine issues critically from all sides.
- They must be willing to interact with faculty from other disciplines.
- They must be willing to do the homework—read the books, papers, reports; conduct the interviews; and complete the assignments.
- They must be able to meet deadlines.
- They must be thick-skinned because they will often serve as the lightning rod for all faculty concerns and complaints.

Perhaps most important, they must have an appreciation for the marketing planning process—believe that creating and implementing a marketing plan is in the best interests of all campus stakeholders, including faculty.

Table 7-5.
Constituencies With Whom the Recruiting Representative Communicates

Internal Staff
Field recruiters
Financial aid
Registrar

External Constituencies
Prospective students
- Traditional
- Of color
- International
- Nontraditional
- Graduate

Parents
High school influencers
- Guidance counselors
- Club advisers
- Coaches

Fund raising

The marketing team must also include someone from the fund raising office. Like the representative from public relations, this person is responsible for serving as a communication and information-gathering liaison with internal and external constituencies. For the fund-raising office, these would include the constituencies listed in Table 7-4.

All fund-raising staff, working through the fund-raising representative, are involved in the planning process. And like the public relations representative, the fund-raising representative must see that the perceptions, needs, and expectations of key external constituencies are sought.

Recruiting and admissions

The representative from recruiting and admissions, too, is responsible for involving internal staff and constituencies and external constituencies in the planning process. The person from recruiting should represent all of the institution's student recruiting functions—not just undergraduate. In some cases, perhaps most, this will include graduate, nontraditional, continuing education, and recruiting for weekend and evening programs. See Table 7-5.

If your institution uses an enrollment management model that includes a separate student services area, it may not be necessary to include the student services representative. However, it has been my experience that representatives from student services often have unique insights into student needs that are of great importance to the planning process.

Student services

The representative from student services also plays an important role by serving as a

Quick Glance

The Role of the Academic Dean

For a variety of reasons I do not recommend using the academic dean or provost as the academic representative. In my experience, this person does not have the time to complete this assignment, is not seen by most faculty as a legitimate faculty representative, is too often involved in faculty personnel matters, and generally has difficulty shedding his or her administrative cloak. It is much more effective and representative to have the involvement of a full-time faculty member or members.

Table 7-6.
Constituencies With Whom the Student Services Representative Communicates

Internal Staff
Orientation
Testing and evaluation
Counseling/advising
Campus life
Residence life
Health services
Career planning
Placement
Spiritual life

liaison with the internal constituencies outlined in Table 7-6.

Athletics

Surprisingly, few institutions include representatives from athletics on the marketing team. In most cases, this is a mistake. A strong or at least well-known athletic program has enormous marketing impact and offers tremendous opportunity for student recruiting, donor and alumni relations, and community relations. Coaches and sports information directors often have useful contacts in the media, among community residents, and among donors that could benefit not just athletics but the larger institution.

Institutional research

The marketing team will also benefit by including a member from institutional research. This representative has three possible functions: to assemble all relevant current research conducted by individuals and departments at the institution, to make sure the team does not initiate research now being undertaken by some other entity, and to oversee primary and secondary research completed as part of the planning process.

Finance office

The final member of the marketing planning team is a senior representative of the finance office. The inclusion of this person in the planning process is important for two reasons. First, only someone from the finance office is able to determine how much money all departments are currently spending on marketing and related activities. And second, the involvement of a person from finance early in the planning process increases the likelihood that he or she will more completely understand marketing, its potential benefits, and the importance of the institution providing long-term funding. Often these people become important allies when it comes time to develop or argue for a budget.

Quick Glance

Faculty Concerns About the Planning Process

Generally, faculty members are the biggest critics of marketing. However, the composition and size of the marketing team and how aggressively it seeks and manages faculty input can do a great deal to blunt criticism and even garner support.

As faculty look at the members of the marketing team and its leadership, they will ask themselves these questions:

- Is the team interested in me and my ideas?
- Are its members academically and experientially qualified?
- Does the team understand the qualities and characteristics that make educational institutions unique and valued?
- Will members work within current channels of governance and communication, or are they buckaroos who ride roughshod over the campus?
- Does the team care about the institution, my department, and me as much as I do?

Who's missing?

Unless there is a compelling reason, I do not generally recommend that the marketing team include the following audiences:

- Current students
- Alumni
- Trustees
- Community residents
- Business leaders
- Donors
- The president

Table 7-7
Solicitation of Input from Non-team Members

Audience	Team Members Solicits Input from
Current students	Student services or student recruiting
Alumni	Fund raising
Trustees	Champion or advancement
Community residents	Public relations
Business leaders	Fund raising or public relations
Donors	Fund raising
President	Champion

Of course, you're wondering why these people have been omitted from the planning process. Well, actually, they haven't. Rather than having them on the team, however, I believe that their needs and the institution's needs are best served by having other team members aggressively solicit their input, especially at the situational-analysis stage.

Table 7-7 outlines who will solicit input from each of these important cohorts.

Establishing the credibility of the marketing team

To help establish credibility, the champion and team members should get out and meet people, especially faculty. Attend divisional meetings. Tour facilities. Ask questions, listen, and keep confidences. Share success with everyone involved and even a few people who aren't. Nothing blunts criticism faster than sharing success. And finally, make your promises carefully. In some cases, your marketing effort will be measured more by what you failed to accomplish than by what you did accomplish.

Support among faculty for marketing must be earned. You'll know you have the support of the faculty when they look at you as a resource rather than an obstacle. And though you may never hear praise from faculty, if they start coming to you with information and ideas instead of just criticism, you have gone a long way toward earning their respect.

Some final comments about team composition

As you think about the composition of your marketing team, there are two other realities to address. First, the team should include people who will actually oversee the plan's implementation. If it doesn't, they will never have the necessary ownership, and you will miss the benefit of their experience and expertise. Second, though I have outlined a process for creating a fairly large team, you should always try to keep your marketing team as small as possible. It is difficult, if not impossible, for large teams to meet often enough to get the job done in a timely fashion.

Space and resources

Now that you have a marketing team, you need somewhere to meet and work. Your

meeting room should have the following:

- An overhead projector
- A slide projector
- A screen
- Large chalkboards or dry-marker erasable boards with chalk and dry markers
- Flip charts
- A telephone
- Quick access to a photocopier
- A computer with access to the Internet
- Work tables
- Movable chairs and couches
- Quick access to coffee, soft drinks, and restrooms

You should also have copies of the following documents, reports, and data sets:

- Mission statement (if it's not in the catalog)
- Vision statement
- Strategic plan and initiatives
- Detailed institutional budget
- Campus master plan including
  - Planned renovations
  - Schedule of new buildings
  - Technology plan
- Annual report
- Most recent accreditation report
- All recent institutional research
- Local, regional, and/or national demographic, economic, and job-trend data
- Data on all competing colleges and universities
- College guides such as Barron's or Peterson's
- College catalog(s)
- Samples of all recruiting publications
- Campaign case statements
- Samples of all fund-raising literature
- Samples of literature from competing institutions
- Longitudinal recruiting and retention data
- Longitudinal annual fund and fund-raising data

Computer and software resources

If they are available, certain software and computer resources will make your work more efficient and effective.

A linked or network-based meeting scheduling software package such as Lotus Notes, Schedule Maker Pro, Team Agenda, or Sidekick Group Scheduling will make scheduling your meetings much easier.

E-mail can cut down on the need for so many meetings. You can use e-mail to

query team members about a particular topic or issue, poll them about a decision, or even schedule meetings.

An idea generator such as Idea Fisher is a wonderful tool for facilitating group thinking and discussion. Ideas can be posed, expanded, and quickly evaluated.

I strongly suggest you also use planning software such as ManagePro, On Target, Fast Track Schedule, or Sure Track. This software will save you an enormous amount of time and frustration as the plan is developed, refined, implemented, and changed. We will explore the use of planning software in greater depth later in this chapter.

A computer-based projection system helps too. A good system will allow you to project your monitor's image to a large screen. This is especially useful when compiling initial lists and ideas, such as threats facing the campus. Using a computer to record and project the team's comments and ideas will make the process much more engaging and efficient. It is also helpful to use a projection system when examining World Wide Web sites.

Step 5: Build the team

"Using planning software will save you time and frustration."

In all likelihood, members of the marketing planning team will arrive with different expectations and different skill sets. There is a high probability that members have never worked together. Each one probably feels more responsibility to his or her own department or discipline than to the team, the process, and the institution. At this early stage, the members are a team in name only. The goal of this step is to help you coalesce the individual members into a team.

What is a team?

Before we proceed too much further, let's clarify the term team. Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith describe a team as "a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable." Teams agree on processes and rules and work toward a common goal or goals.

An expanded definition of teams

To help gain a more complete understanding of teams, it might be useful to explore Katzenbach and Smith's definition in greater detail. Drawing heavily from their book, *The Wisdom of Teams*, we note that teams...

... must develop the right mix of skills, generally in three categories:

- Technical or functional expertise
- Problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Interpersonal skills

... must be committed to a common purpose and performance goals. Teams develop direction, momentum, and commitment by working to shape a meaningful purpose.

. . . are committed to a common approach—a clear sense of how they will work together to accomplish their purpose.

. . . have mutual accountability. No group ever becomes a team until it can hold itself accountable as a team. Think, for example, about the subtle but critical difference between "the president holds me accountable" and "we hold ourselves accountable." At its core, team accountability is about the promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin two aspects of teams: commitment and trust.

Table 7-8.
Individual Team Behaviors

Individual Behavior Trait	Group or Team Behavior or or Trait
Reticent	Communicative
Secretive or reserved	Open
Conflictual	Cooperative
Apprehensive	Trusting
Impersonal	Mutually concerned
Avoiding responsibility	Self-responsible
Sterile	Creative
Alienated	Committed
Confused about roles	Clear about roles
Individual-centered	Team-centered

Source: Glenn Parker

From individual behavior to team behavior

In many respects, what you have assembled, or will soon assemble, is a cross-functional team. This is composed of people from different departments and perspectives. For example, instead of having everyone on your team from the public relations office, the team will be composed of individuals from many different offices with different perspectives and backgrounds.

One of the most important first goals is to help what are at first cross-functional members coalesce into a true marketing team. Though it may never be possible for individuals to forget the constituencies they represent, it is possible for everyone to have a greater understanding of and appreciation for the team as a subset of the larger institution.

Glenn Parker and others define team-building as a structured attempt to improve or develop the effectiveness of a group of people who work together, temporarily or permanently. Representatives from internal and external constituencies will join your team with a number of behavioral traits. Most of these are positive. Others, however, are destructive or at least counterproductive. The champion must understand the need to move from individual behaviors to group behaviors. See Table 7-8.

Champion as team builder

In most cases, it is the champion's responsibility to build the team. However, in some instances it is helpful to use the services of a team building expert early on. This is especially important if the champion has neither the background nor the affinity for team building.

This section of Chapter 7 contains suggestions and recommendations that will help you not only build a strong marketing team but understand team dynamics, work with your team, recognize the characteristics of dysfunctional teams, and present options for rewarding your team. It is not designed to replace more comprehensive team building resources; rather, it is a primer on team building. The close of this section offers a number of excellent, comprehensive resources.

As the champion works to build the team, he or she should keep in mind the

following suggestions:

- Maintain a sense of urgency and direction—the more urgent and meaningful the rationale, the more likely that a real team will emerge.
- Select team members by skills and skill potential, not personality. Skill sets of value include technical and functional, problem-solving, and interpersonal.
- Pay particular attention to first meetings and actions. When potential teams first gather, everyone alertly monitors others' signals to confirm, suspect, or dispel going-in assumptions and concerns. They pay particular attention to those in authority, especially the champion.
- Set up clear rules of behavior. The most critical rules pertain to attendance, discussion, confidentiality, analytic approach, end-product orientation, constructive confrontation, and contributions.
- Challenge the group regularly with fresh factions—new arrangements of work groups and new people—and additional information.
- Spend lots of time together.
- Exploit the power of positive feedback, recognition, and reward; even the strongest egos respond to positive feedback when it is real.

Team size

Earlier, when discussing the possible members of the marketing team, I noted the tension between having input from various internal and external stakeholders and the need to keep the team as small as possible. Katzenbach and Smith indicate that while it is theoretically possible to have a team of any size, critical interaction is often lost as team size expands: "Large numbers of people—by virtue of their size—have trouble interacting constructively as a group, much less agreeing on actionable specifics. Ten people are far more likely than 50 to successfully work through their individual, functional, and hierarchical differences toward a common plan and hold themselves jointly accountable for the results."

Quick Glance

Team building

There are several excellent books and resources available for helping you build strong teams. Some favorites include Glenn Parker's *Cross-Functional Teams: Working With Allies, Enemies, and Other Strangers* and the *1996 Handbook of Best Practices for Teams*, Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith's *The Wisdom of Teams*, and Price Pritchett's *The Team Member Handbook for Teamwork*.

Appendix D contains a brief primer for working with teams.

Step 6: Define planning relationships and marketing terminology

Perhaps you have just finished a strategic planning process, and some audiences with whom you will be working do not understand how marketing planning relates to strategic planning. It is important at the outset to explain how these two distinct but similar planning processes relate.

Strategic planning is designed to help institutions respond effectively to new situations. John Bryson noted, in *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, that

> **Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions shaping the nature and direction of an organization.**

Others define strategic planning as a long-range planning process that focuses on adapting the organization to environmental change.

Both definitions contain the same outward and then inward view—the simple but often overlooked understanding that institutions must look outside and understand, even anticipate, their environment and marketplace before they can develop a plan.

Marketing looks outward and inward as well. In the literature and in practice, we know there is a fine line between strategic planning and marketing planning. The marketing goals that result from marketing planning are often very similar to the strategic initiatives that result from strategic planning.

Recently I began helping a small, private, liberal arts college in the Midwest develop a marketing plan. We began shortly after the college completed a strategic plan. As part of its strategic plan, the following seven strategic initiatives were developed:

- Enhance academic quality.
- Enroll and retain excellent students.
- Create a rich co-curricular experience.
- Establish an effective and unique program of leadership development and community service.
- Strengthen fund raising and endowment.
- Improve management and communication.
- Enhance facilities to support program initiatives.

Another client, this one a public four-year institution on the West Coast, has undertaken the following extraordinarily straightforward strategic initiatives:

- Increase enrollment.
- Increase endowment size.
- Increase academic quality of entering students.
- Develop a comprehensive facilities plan.

A third client, a two-year public institution in Illinois, has the following strategic initiatives:

- Provide the best education value in the region.
- Increase access.
- Recognize the importance of all people.
- Develop a mutually supportive relationship with the community.
- Build stronger ties to local high schools.
- Cultivate ties with local business and industry.
- Design a database form that clearly outlines the types of information we want to collect about each record or entry.

As you can see, these strategic initiatives have significant marketing overtones. For example, the desire to enhance academic quality, enroll and retain excellent students, and strengthen fund raising and endowment are very market- and marketing-oriented. However, although the strategic plan offers initiatives and goals, it does not

outline specific methods for achieving the goals. Nor does it include budgets and methods of accountability.

Both strategic plans and marketing plans originate from the institutional mission and vision. However, whereas the vision and strategic plan provide a broad-sweep institutional direction, the marketing plan is often more concerned with the day-to-day. Or, as one president noted, the purpose of the marketing plan is to give "legs" to the strategic plan.

Settle on terms and definitions

As part of the planning process, you must make sure that all the parties involved define marketing the same way. There is nothing more frustrating than spending six months writing a comprehensive marketing plan only to find that the president didn't mean marketing—he or she really meant promotion.

At the outset, you must take the time to clarify how your president and dean and vice president for development define marketing. Make absolutely sure that everyone is using the same terminology. If their definition is really promotion, you have two options. You can try to educate them about the challenges facing your institution (take a look at Chapter 1 again) and show how a complete definition of marketing can help them address these challenges.** This will take time—especially if you want them, and you do, to have true ownership of the marketing planning process. The second option is to work with their definition of marketing, then write a great marketing/promotion plan—and as you and your plan succeed, begin slowly to expand, over time, everyone's working definition of marketing.

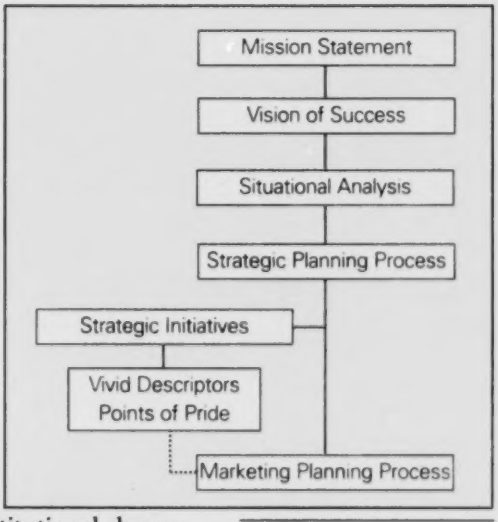

Figure 7-4.
Marketing, Mission, Vision, and Strategy

Step 7: Affirm the unchangeables

The next step in the process is to affirm the unchangeables—the institutional characteristics, qualities, and values that are not up for debate. In most, almost all, cases, the institution's mission is the foundation on which marketing plans are built. Missions are the marketing constants, not marketing variables. If your institution is a women's college, your marketing plan must affirm this important reality. If you work at a regional public with a long, proud history of teacher education, your marketing plan and activities must be consistent with this overarching reality.

Before you initiate a planning process, you absolutely must affirm, with internal and external campus constituencies, the institutional characteristics, qualities, and values that are mission-critical. Reinforce, as much as possible at this stage, your points

**If your senior administrators do not have a realistic appraisal of the challenges and opportunities facing the institution, you also need to take a look at any strategic planning documents. Chances are their founding assumptions and ensuing strategic initiatives are flawed as well.

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of pride and vivid descriptors (more about these later). Clarify the geography you want to continue to serve. Focus on your mission and vision. See Figure 7-4.

It is very important that everyone involved in your planning process understands your *raison d'être* and that the entire campus community knows your planners have this understanding.

Step 8: Establish the range of possibilities

After you have thrown a philosophical fence around your *raison d'être,* it is time to establish a full range of possibilities. This is an enormously important and sometimes prickly step. Many years ago I read a wonderful book on problem-solving called *Conceptual Blockbusting: A Guide to Better Ideas.* The author, James Adams, made the point that too often we arrive at bad decisions, or are not able to conceptualize good decisions, because we unnecessarily limit the range of possible alternatives. We don't consider options because we too narrowly define the problem and/or range of possible solutions.

As I write this, I am working with a college that has served young women in the South for more than 100 years. Its target audiences have largely been traditional-age white women, and this institution is very concerned about the shrinking and competitiveness of this market. Helping some of its faculty, administrators, and staff understand that there are great numbers of nontraditional-age women and nonwhite women it might serve was an important first step in helping to establish a range of possibilities. That same college has a curriculum that is dominated by majors addressing traditional women's roles of teaching, nursing, secretarial studies, and homemaking. Helping the college review its curriculum in light of changing educational needs and expectations has greatly expanded the range of possibilities there.

Table 7-9.
Unchangeables and Changeables

Institutional Characteristics We Will Not Change	Characteristics We Might Be Willing to Change
Commitment to academic quality	Serving only traditional-age students
Commitment to serving students in the Dallas/Fort Worth multiplex	Offering programs only on our campus
Commitment to the liberal arts	Stressing traditional teaching/learning models
	Not offering professional programs that complement the liberal arts
	Not serving nonresidential/commuter populations

As part of the planning process, I have found it useful to create a two-columned table that lists both institutional unchangeables and those characteristics or qualities that might, in fact, be modified or even replaced. For another client, I developed a grid that looked like the one in Table 7-9.

As you use this table to help define your range of possibilities, take time to really examine your unchangeables. Some should be absolute—especially those that are mission-critical. Other unchangeables, with proper inspection, may not be as rigid as you think. For example, a college that historically offered classes only in the daytime felt that this was unchangeable. However, it was not really mission-critical, only convenient for faculty.

Step 9: Decide whether to stay inside or go outside

The next step in marketing planning is to decide whether to proceed with the planning process on your own or to bring in outside help. The decision to retain outside counsel may occur for a number of interrelated reasons, including that

- Administrators lack sufficient marketing expertise.
- The marketing process is unduly politicized, and you want objective help.
- A qualified outside firm, drawing on experience from other colleges and universities, is able to provide a unique perspective on the marketing problems and issues you face.
- An outside expert is able to complement the marketing champion's strengths and weaknesses.
- An outside expert may help legitimize the marketing effort to wary members of the campus community.
- An outside firm may have access to secondary data sources not immediately available to you.

Step 10: Outline the planning process

There are many ways to conceptualize the marketing planning process. One of my favorites is the use of the simple yet appropriate acronym S-O-S, which stands for situation, objectives, and strategy.

The first S, situation, helps formulate such questions as these:

- What's it like now?
- What's going on?

Table 7-10.
The Expanded Marketing-Planning Process

Situational Analysis	1. Internal/institutional analysis 2. External/environmental analysis 3. Creation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)
Market Research	1. Perceptual 2. Needs analysis 3. Competitive 4. Environmental
Strategy Formation	1. Prioritize marketing goals 2. Prioritize target audiences 3. Write marketing action plans 4. Assemble the final plan
Strategy Execution	Implement the plan
Program Review and Evaluation	Evaluate the plan

Quick Glance

Faculty as Facilitators

I am often asked about the strengths and weaknesses of faculty as facilitators in the marketing planning process. Faculty can make great leaders as long as they have the time, are qualified, and are unbiased. However, potential faculty facilitators must understand their role. Are they serving as facilitators or champions? If facilitators, they must understand that their job is to support, not supplant, the champion. If they are to serve as the champion, they must work hard to look at problems and opportunities from the perspective of the whole institution, not just the faculty or their department. Finally, faculty facilitators must recognize that other faculty will place them under enormous pressure. They may even find themselves alienated, temporarily or permanently, from their peers.

- What's happening to us?
- And why?

O, objective, reminds us to examine such issues as these:

- What are we going to do about this?
- What are our options?
- What are our goals?

The final S, strategy, invites us to outline options for achieving our objectives and goals:

- What activities do we need to accomplish our goals?
- Who will be doing what, when?

Figure 7-5
Outline of the Strategic Marketing Plan

1. College or university mission statement
2. College or university vision statement
3. Situational analysis:
   - review of internal/institutional data
   - review of external/environmental data
   - synthesized and prioritized
     - strengths
     - weaknesses
     - opportunities
     - threats
4. Vivid descriptors/ points of pride
5. Prioritized marketing goals
6. Prioritized target audiences
7. Marketing action plans
8. Budgets
9. Timelines

Though the planning process outlined in Table 7-10 may appear a bit more detailed and comprehensive, you will quickly see that it follows roughly the same basic S-O-S. The first stages—situational analysis and market research—are directed at defining the situation.

The second stage—strategy formation—involves establishing the objectives.

The final stages—strategy execution and program review and evaluation—are concerned with strategy.

The strategic marketing plan outline

There are many ways to organize a marketing plan. Over the years, however, I have found the outline in Figure 7-5 extremely useful.

This is the planning process and outline to be introduced and explained in Chapter 8.

8

Writing the Plan

"Write.
Write.
Write.
Write it down."

—Lyric from *Sesame Street*

In Chapter 7 we focused on laying the foundation for a successful marketing planning process. Now it is time to build on that foundation and write the actual plan. To accomplish this task, we will work through the nine steps listed in Table 8-1.

Table 8-1.
Writing the Plan

Undertake a situational analysis
Decide on research
Prioritize and finalize SWOT
Settle on vivid descriptors
Establish marketing goals
Clarify target audiences
Write marketing action plans
Establish the budget
Debug the plan

Components of the marketing plan

Before we proceed, however, it will help to revisit the planning outline introduced at the close of Chapter 7 (Figure 7-5). That outline is a useful guide to what the final plan will look like.

The mission statement

As stated previously, it is very important that the marketing plan begin with a presentation of the institution's mission. This establishes the plan's general direction and tone and helps to affirm the unchangeables.

If you are not comfortable with putting mission at the opening of the plan, you must address possible incongruencies between the mission and your marketing goals and objectives. Either your mission or your plan must change.

The vision statement

Chapter 2 discussed vision at length and noted that whereas an institution's mission is a declaration of purpose, the vision helps clarify what the organization should look like as it fulfills its mission.

Vision provides a vital sense of direction or, as stated by Burt Nanus, "a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization." Good marketing plans are built on achievable, shared vision.

Situational analysis

The situational analysis, sometimes called an institutional analysis, is the third component of a marketing plan. Philip Kotler and Patrick Murphy define it as "a systematic evaluation of the institution and its environment." They write further that "the goals of a situational analysis are to identify, evaluate, and prioritize your institution's external and internal environment." These data are coalesced and organized into what is called the SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The situational analysis is often coalesced into a succinct position statement—a short paragraph that describes the "position" or status of the institution at the present time.

Marketing plans must include a realistic situational analysis. Many major marketing mistakes occur because the institution skipped or glossed over this step.

Vivid descriptors

Sometimes called points of pride, these are institutional characteristics or attributes that you want to communicate to your target audiences—the things for which you want to be known. Remember, though, that credible vivid descriptors must be valued by both the institution and the target audiences.

Prioritized marketing goals

As you work through the situational analysis, you will uncover myriad opportunities and obstacles you might address. The most important four or five of these will become formal marketing goals. A goal, sometimes called an objective, is something you wish to accomplish—increasing name recognition within your primary market, for example.

Because of time, budget, and talent limits, you must set priorities among your marketing goals. Keep in mind: It is much better to accomplish a few goals than to fail at accomplishing a larger number. At educational institutions, as in many organizations, you are often more remembered for what you failed to do than for what you did.

Marketing action plans (MAPs)

Marketing action plans are strategies that, when combined, help accomplish your marketing goals. If your goal, as noted above, is to increase name recognition in your

primary market, your MAPs might include these:

- Hiring a special events director
- Developing a stronger media relations effort
- Implementing a regional advertising campaign

As you will see later, MAPs carefully outline the specific strategy, note which marketing goal it supports, detail who will be responsible for its implementation, and indicate how it will be evaluated. MAPs also include a budget and timeline for completion.

Budgets

The next component of the marketing plan is presentation of the overall budget. This will be a compilation of the budgets established for each marketing action plan. Remember, the general budget was established with the president before the planning process began. The final budget is much more detailed and includes dollars allocated for each action plan.

Timelines

The final element of a marketing plan is a master timeline. Each MAP details when it will be implemented and how long it will run. The master timeline includes all MAPs so you have an exact understanding of what is happening when.

Now that we have a basic understanding of the components of the plan document, let's begin to draw them together.

Step 11: Undertake a situational analysis

Marketing plans begin with a thorough understanding of the institution and its marketplace. This process is called a situational or institutional analysis. This is a careful, systematic evaluation, from a marketing perspective, of your institution and its environment. The most important outcome is the gathering of data that will help guide the overall planning process. However, a properly conducted situational analysis is also a powerful means to help generate campus support for the planning process and the resulting plan.

If you have recently completed a strategic plan, you likely completed a situational analysis as part of it. If this is the case, examine the SWOT developed then and evaluate its completeness and currency before deciding to proceed with the situational analysis for the marketing plan.

Generally, the situational analysis is divided into two broad areas: internal/institutional and external/environmental.

Internal/institutional analysis

Depending on the degree of sophistication sought and the mandate from the presi-

Quick Glance

How Comprehensive Should the Situational Analysis Be?

As you consider whether your situational analysis should be more or less comprehensive, you need to factor in a number of variables. Consider the deadline for finalizing the plan; the number, variety, and size of the marketing decisions you will be making; the mood of the campus; the knowledge of the senior staff and marketing team; the trust level of major constituents; and the quality of available data. All things considered, it is almost always better to err by being too comprehensive than by being not comprehensive enough. This is especially true when the atmosphere on campus is politically charged.

dent, the internal/institutional analysis may include the following activities:

- Evaluate current leadership.
- Review existing planning documents:
  - Strategic plan
  - Academic plan
  - Marketing plan
  - Recruiting plan
  - Fund-raising plan
  - Capital improvement plan
  - Technology plan
- Review current market research.
- Review quality and currency of the institution's general core and curriculum.
- Evaluate faculty competencies.
- Evaluate success of recruiting and fund-raising strategies and activities.
- Determine how such internal audiences as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and trustees perceive the institution.*
- Examine current product, price, place, and promotion strategies.
- Review facilities and the physical plant.
- Evaluate deferred maintenance schedule.
- Audit internal communication strategies.

*Some may consider trustees an external constituency, and that's all right. The important thing is to make sure they are queried.

External/environmental analysis

The second component of the situational analysis is an audit of the external environment. In many cases, this analysis parallels the internal one. A comprehensive external/environmental analysis would include the following:

- Review linkages and exchange relationships with such key external publics as business leaders, community leaders, local government officials, and area religious institutions (if applicable).
- Determine how such external publics as these perceive the institution:
  - Prospective students
  - Parents
  - High school influencers
  - Regional employers
  - Business leaders
  - Alumni
  - Community residents
  - Community leaders
  - Legislators and legislative staffs
  - Donors
  - Foundations

- Examine local, regional, national, and even international economic, demographic, and employment trends.
- Determine unmet educational need in primary service area.
- Complete an analysis/comparison of the institutions with which you compete for students, gifts, or media attention.
- Complete an audit of your external communication strategies.

The role of the marketing team

The marketing team, under the champion's leadership, is responsible for undertaking the situational analysis. The team can expect to conduct the following activities:

- Announce to internal and external audiences that the analysis is being undertaken; include information about its purpose and timeline.
- Gather and evaluate existing documents.
- Complete interviews with stakeholders.

As part of this analysis, the marketing team must commit to a basic set of rules:

- The team members are conduits, not filters. It is their job to collect all data whether they agree with it or not.
- The team should avoid using suspect, tainted, or anonymous data. All data sources must be cited.
- Great care must be taken to separate institutional myth and hype from marketing reality.
- As much as possible, data should be quantitative.
- This situational analysis should be as inclusive as possible.

Strategies for gathering data

Excellent strategies for gathering data as part of the institutional analysis include the following:

- Holding in-depth interviews with key constituents.
- Holding focus-group interviews with stakeholders.
- Putting broad questions on the campus electronic bulletin board.
- Sending individual surveys to faculty, staff, administrators, and students.
- Putting a survey instrument in campus newspapers or alumni magazines.
- Sponsoring campus-wide forums and discussions.
- Sending individual questionnaires to key administrators and faculty chairs.
- Obtaining local, regional, and national data from government agencies .
- Gathering data from such consortiums and professional associations as the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, National Society of Fund Raising Executives, American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers, American College Testing Program, American Council on Education, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

Quick Glance

Dealing with Anonymous Data and Information

As part of the internal and external situational analyses, you are very likely to receive anonymous data from one source or another. This type of data is almost always suspect and should generally be disregarded. There is little to be gained by using anonymous data, and there is a high likelihood that decisions to use it will come back to haunt you if you do.

Asking and answering

As part of the situational analysis, you will be asking different constituents their opinions on different aspects of the college or university. These queries may occur one-on-one, in groups, or through survey research.

Your interviews or surveys should begin with a basic explanation of why you are seeking opinions and how you'll use them. Because many of the questions and answers are sensitive, you should, where appropriate and possible, offer respondents both anonymity and confidentiality.

With each group of stakeholders, ask the following general questions:

- From your perspective, what are the institution's major strengths?
- What do you believe are its major weaknesses?
- What do you believe are the major opportunities in our marketplace?
- What are the major threats or challenges in our marketplace?
- If you could change one aspect of the institution, what would it be?
- If you had a reasonable budget, what marketing activity would you tackle?
- I'd like to see the institution . . . .
- I choose to work here (or go to school here) because . . . .
- I think the institution can better respond to the future by . . . .
- I believe institutional quality entails . . . .
- For what should this institution be known? When people hear our name, what images would you like to have pop into their mind?

Appendix E contains a sample instrument for querying faculty. It is easy to modify for use with staff, administrators, and other constituents.

Organizing the data

During a situational analysis, you will quickly find yourself under an avalanche of data. It will help to begin organizing your findings into four broad categories:

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Robert Smith uses the following definitions:

- Strengths: Comparative advantages over competitors. Resources that establish the institution's desired position or something on which you can capitalize. Examples:
  - Reputation for outstanding teaching
  - Stable or growing endowment
  - High placement rate for graduates
- Weaknesses: Problems, deficiencies, shortcomings, or flaws that detract from the institution's desired position. Weaknesses often consume resources that are better used elsewhere.

Examples:

- Lack of modern instructional technology equivalent to students' experiences in high school
- Untrained or inadequate staff in the development office
- Poor annual fund participation rate among alumni

■ Opportunity: An attractive, sometimes fleeting occurrence or trend where action is likely to produce a positive, competitive advantage. Responding to opportunities can propel the institution forward.

Examples:

- A new employer with educational needs moves into the area
- A national report lists the institution among the safest in the country
- A campus study reveals a strong and growing demand for graduate courses among local school systems

■ Threat: An unfavorable trend or specific event that would lead to stagnation, decline, or demise of the institution or one of its programs.

Examples:

- Decline in the number of area high school graduates
- Collapse of a major employer of the institution's graduates
- Erosion of tax base used to fund education in the state

As you think about conceptualizing and organizing your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats grid, it may be helpful to remember the following:

■ Strengths and weaknesses are usually internal/institutional, whereas opportunities and threats are generally external/environmental. See Table 8-2.

■ Something can be both a strength and a weakness or an opportunity and a threat. Consider, for example, an urban-based college. Because of its proximity to jobs, cultural events, and entertainment, students might consider its location a strength. However, these same students, concerned about safety, may look at the location as a weakness.

■ Different audiences may place the same characteristic in different categories. Students, for example, may consider strong campus life a strength while parents, concerned about time away from studies or the influence of a party school, consider it a weakness.

■ Not everyone on the team has to agree that something is a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat before it can be added to the SWOT grid. It is perfectly acceptable to have civil disagreement at this point. It is more important to make the list as comprehensive as possible than it is to have unanimity.

■ Colleges and universities often approach a SWOT analysis with a tremendous amount of denial. Senior administrators and faculty who are often removed from day-to-day realities are especially guilty of looking at threats and weaknesses through rose-colored glasses.

Table 8-2.
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Internal/ Institutional	External Environmental
Strength	Opportunity
Weakness	Threat

Table 8-3.
SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Faculty credentials and emphasis on teaching	Value vs. cost	College/business	Increased competition from publics and privates
Graduation rate	High cost to attend	Internships	Tuition gap between publics and privates
Presidential leadership	Dated, often antiquated facilities	Service/community relations	Uncertain government policies
Location	Low endowment	Leadership opportunities for students	Private college competition with more name recognition and financial aid
Current student research	Campus climate: anger and apathy	Summer school	Declining student pools
Commitment to customer service	Location	New recruiting markets	
Campus ambiance/ environment	Little institutional image, especially in emerging recruiting markets	Transfer market	
Many credible alumni	Poor retention rate	Experiential learning	
	Low level of student involvement in campus activities	Employer needs	
	Low annual fund participation	Summer camps/ conferences	
	Meager fund-raising ability		
	Lost alumni		
	Inability to make decisions in a timely manner		
	Too much faculty involvement in governance process		
	No common vision		
	Few noteworthy cultural events		

The SWOT grid

As you gather and organize your data, it is very likely that you will soon have a grid like the one in Table 8-3, prepared by a client in the West as it worked through its

Table 8-4.
SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Instructional environment	Lack of solid research data	Location in a growing, receptive community	Increased competition for prospective students
Safe, pristine environment	Poor regional image	Increasing number of high school graduates in service area	Location
Quality of life	Perception of overly rural/distant location	Budget allocation to support marketing activities	Closing of regional Air Force base
Strong academic programs	Misperceptions among high school counselors	Marketability of the campus	Poor perception of quality
Cost/value	Increased tuition hikes		Perception of tuition hikes
Increasingly diverse enrollment	Misperceptions among prospective students		Loss of power in state legislature
Admissions office	Climate		
Leadership opportunities for students			
Career preparation programs			
Two-year programs			
Tuition discount for graduate dependents			
Creation of a marketing task force			
Renewed emphasis placed on high school guidance counselors			
Honors program			
National academic awards			
Athletic programs			

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

As you read through the grid in Table 8-3, please note a couple of things. First, the grid contains summary statements that often represent more complex issues. Don't worry—the marketing-team secretary will capture the exact wording.

Second, the grid contains several characteristics that are labeled as both strengths

and weaknesses or opportunities and threats. And third, note that these characteristics are marketing-oriented. The purpose of this grid is not to outline every ill and option your institution faces but to focus on those variables that might affect its ability to market itself more aggressively.

Another institution, this one a public university in Michigan, developed the list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats found in Table 8-4. The analysis outlined above reveals several tendencies common among institutions seeking to undertake a comprehensive SWOT analysis. First, there is a disproportionate number of strengths, and many of them have at best a tangential effect on the institution's ability to market itself.

"Remember, weaknesses tend to be internal, and threats tend to be external."

Second, there is a great degree of overlap between weaknesses and threats. Remember, weaknesses tend to be internal, and threats tend to be external. The majority of the weaknesses listed seem to focus on misperceptions, though tuition hikes and climate are also mentioned. Note, however, that this institution listed a lack of solid research data as its first weakness. Of course, the question comes to mind: If you don't have data, how do you know you are being misperceived?

Third, there is very little effort to develop a comprehensive list of opportunities and no attempt to tie them back to the institution's vision for success. Research would have helped to define educational needs and expectations in the marketplace that might provide some initial direction. In addition, a basic competitive analysis would have been helpful.

Finally, the list of threats seems to show the most thought and analysis.

One last comment. This SWOT analysis is strikingly political. Whereas the strengths are glowing and numerous, the weaknesses are either superficial or external. There is no real heartfelt analysis of internal weaknesses—of failed policies, poor practices, or dated programs.

One final SWOT grid in Table 8-5 is worth examining, this one from a large private institution in the South.

This SWOT analysis is much more realistic and less self-serving. It acknowledges a problem with administrative leadership and customer service—two areas that many institutions choose to ignore. It also correctly identifies competition with public institutions and declining family savings rates as major challenges.

Step 12: Decide on market research

The situational analysis will often lead to a realization that you don't know enough, or even anything, about a particular issue. For example, the campus may not have recent data on how various internal or external audiences perceive it. Perhaps the institution has never examined unmet educational need in its service area. Maybe no one has undertaken a systematic evaluation of its curriculum.

At this point, the college must make a decision on whether it should undertake formal market research to gather the data it needs. This is often a tough decision. On the pro side, good data will provide extraordinarily valuable insight. On the con side,

Table 8-5.
SWOT Analysis

Strengths Location	Weaknesses Cost	Opportunities Location	Threats Competing public institution nearby
Small classes	Registration process	Proximity to one of the fastest growing counties in the country	Public higher education in general
Friendly atmosphere	Class scheduling—availability and timing	Growing nontraditional market	Falling family savings for college
Programs in premedicine, nursing, education, and business	Ill-conceived recruiting strategies	Strong corporate relations and opportunities	Location perceived as unsafe
Strong, accessible, friendly faculty	Career services	Strong Christian high school and church support	Tuition-reimbursement reductions
Christian environment	Student/campus life	Home schooling	Changing demography—more and more people do not know us
Quarterly calendar	Administrative leadership that is reactive rather than proactive	Able to build on reputations of a handful of majors	Not delivering on service
High annual fund participation	Student advising	Strong community interest in Christian higher education	Misperceptions about the institution
Strong donor relations	Takes too long to graduate		
	Lack of a consistent and persistent image		
	Limited facilities		
	Too many weak programs		
	Lack of a comprehensive retention strategy		

research requires time and money.

Though there is no simple rule that will help you determine whether you need to undertake research, keep in mind the following. If you …

- Need perspective
- Work in a politically charged environment
- Need data to help you make major or difficult decisions
- Plan to spend significant dollars over a number of years implementing your marketing plan

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- Politically simply cannot afford to be wrong

... then undertake market research. You won't regret it.

Step 13: Prioritize and finalize SWOT

Even a limited institutional analysis will uncover a potentially unmanageable number of interrelated problems and opportunities. For this reason, it is crucial to juxtapose data against institutional priorities so planners may accurately allocate resources. Many marketing plans founder because their designers tried to do too much at once. It's better to begin solving the most pressing marketing problems this year and save secondary problems for the future.

Organizing the SWOT

There are several ways to organize your SWOT data. Two of my favorites include the internal vs. external approach—similar to how the SWOT data were presented in Tables 8-3 – 8-5—and the task-area approach.

The internal vs. external approach

This way is very straightforward. As you can see from the SWOT analyses on the previous pages, the internal vs. external approach organizes the data in two large categories—internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats.

The task area approach

By contrast, the task area approach is designed to help you organize your SWOT around such critical task areas as fund raising, student recruiting, retention, or internal communication.

Table 8-6 focuses on the task area of student recruiting. Of course, your SWOT analysis would include more than one task area. The task area approach also includes a device in the far right column that asks you to indicate whether a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat is distinctive, demonstrable, or critical. These criteria, or others you could customize for your institution, situation, and needs, are designed to help you identify SWOT that might be particularly important or helpful.

Both approaches assume that there will more of a distinction between strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats than there often really is. Keep in mind that these grids are designed to help you organize and weigh the relative value of the data and perceptions you have collected. Use the grid to guide your thinking, but don't let it force you to overcategorize data. It is perfectly reasonable for data or an idea or a concern to be placed in more than one category. Keep in mind that it is more important at this stage to be inclusive rather than exclusive and that categories are less important than content.

Table 8-6
Task-Area SWOT Analysis

	Task Area: Recruiting	
Strengths	1.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	2.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	3.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	4.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
Weaknesses	1.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	2.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	3.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	4.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
Opportunities	1.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	2.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	3.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	4.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
Threats	1.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	2.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	3.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable
	4.	☐ Distinctive ☐ Critical ☐ Demonstrable

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Ballots, please

At this stage, your list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is probably very long and cumbersome—and you probably do not have the institutional resources to address every item on your list.

To solve this problem, I suggest that you use the SWOT list as a ballot and let team members vote on which items are most important.

The voting process works like this. Every team member gets a number of votes—say 12. The member can use three for each SWOT category. Members can give all three of their votes to one item, give one item two votes and another just one vote, or give one vote to three different items.

This voting accomplishes several important tasks. First, it sets priorities in the SWOT list. Second, because some additions to the list were not unanimous, the voting allows a final group evaluation. And third, because the voting is done in secret, individuals are protected from group dynamics and pressure. The SWOT is then retabulated on the basis of the votes. This new, prioritized list reflects the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of most significance to the marketing team. A prioritized SWOT may look like Table 8-7.

Political realities

As part of SWOT analysis, the marketing team must determine how candid it wishes to be. Some campus climates can tolerate more frankness than others.

Let me give you two examples. I was helping a small college in Kansas work through a SWOT analysis. The marketing team was using a large white board in the administrative suite next to the president's office. The team was very reluctant to write

Table 8-7.
Prioritized SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Faculty credentials and emphasis on teaching	High cost vs. perceived value	Improved retention	Declining annual fund participation
Location	Low endowment	Improve alumni involvement in recruiting and fund raising	Stalled capital campaign
Commitment to customer service	Campus climate: anger and apathy	Transfer market	Increased competition from publics and privates for prospective students
Many credible alumni	Little institutional image, especially in emerging recruiting markets	Adult market	Tuition gap between publics and privates
Facilities	Meager fund-raising ability		Private college competition with more name recognition and financial aid

anything critical or controversial on the board because it feared that the president would pop in at any minute. Our location and the team's reluctance to address critical yet obvious issues was problematic. It was clear that the range and honesty of our discussion were hindered.

At another campus, we had presented the final SWOT to the president. As he read the list of weaknesses we developed, he looked up and chided the marketing team for failing to put administrative leadership down as a weakness. "If we had good leadership," he said, "we wouldn't be in this mess."

Presidential "checkoff"

Now that the final SWOT grid has been assembled, it is time to seek approval from the president and perhaps the senior administrative team. As part of this presentation, it is helpful to provide an overview of the SWOT methodology. Write a short report that notes the definition of a situational analysis and individual SWOT components, who and what groups were surveyed, and how the items were assembled and prioritized. The report should emphasize that the SWOT analysis serves as the foundation for the marketing plan. If the SWOT is wrong or incomplete, the plan will likely be wrong or incomplete as well.

Often, after reviewing the list, the president will ask for some explanation, further detail, or even supporting data. Perhaps he or she will offer additional items for the list or ask that another individual or group be interviewed. These are all signs that the president is actively involved in the SWOT approval and should not be cause for alarm. Of more concern is the president who merely glances at the list and says "OK."

"Make sure the president is really focused on major issues that relate to the institution's ability to improve its market position."

It is important that the team doesn't automatically make the adjustments that the president wants. Challenge his or her thinking. Make sure the president is really focused on major issues that relate to the institution's ability to improve its market position. Finally, though, settle on a SWOT that the president can support both politically and budgetarily.

It is very important that the president not only understand the prioritized SWOT but approve it before the next step in the planning can be undertaken.

After approval

After the president approves the SWOT analysis, it should be cleaned up and added to the marketing plan notebook being created by the team secretary. This will be the third component of the marketing plan, following the mission statement and the president's vision of success.

Step 14: Settle on vivid descriptors

Now that the situational analysis has been approved, it is time to begin clarifying your vivid descriptors and points of pride. A vivid descriptor is something for which you want to be known. It is the answer to this question:

When people hear your institution's name, what image do we want to pop into their minds?

Initial answers to this question were gathered as part of the SWOT analysis. However, it is also useful to consider answers to this question in light of your primary competition, the nature of your marketplace, and even your target audiences.

Because the vivid descriptors become a key component of your message flow to target audiences, they must have three qualities. First, they must represent core institutional values. Second, they must be widely shared and appreciated by key campus and external constituencies. And third, they must be enduring—something to which the institution can commit for a long period of time.

One point about vivid descriptors is somewhat confusing. Many people feel that vivid descriptors should be unique, and if they are, that's certainly helpful. But more important than being unique is that the descriptors be mission-critical and of value to your target audiences.

As you think about your vivid descriptors, they may well be "mixed," much like your four Ps. For example, donors may be more interested in some of the descriptors than students.

Sample vivid descriptors

Let's look at list of vivid descriptors developed by a public four-year institution in Texas. In response to the question "for what do we want to be known," the institution settled on the following vivid descriptors:

- A caring, supportive campus culture
- High-quality faculty, facilities, programs, and graduates
- A valuable economic, cultural, and intellectual asset to the region

Another institution, this one a public in Utah, wanted to be known for:

- Small classes
- Undergraduate focus
- Leadership in and partnership with the community
- Access to faculty
- Curriculum focused on real-world issues

A private institution in Ohio wanted to be known for:

- Respect of students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and the community
- Service to students
- Timely graduation
- Academic programs that lead to jobs

Creating a list of vivid descriptors involves looking in and looking out. They must reflect who you are as an institution. At the same time, they must also meet the needs and expectations of the marketplace.

The process for developing a list of vivid descriptors is not unlike the process for establishing your initial and then prioritized SWOT grid. There should be discussion, research, debate, and synthesis.

Often, the same survey and focus-group instruments used to gather initial SWOT data can be used to create the list of vivid descriptors. In fact, if you look at the list of potential SWOT questions presented in the section on asking and answering, you will find that the last question is specifically designed to help you develop a comprehensive list of vivid descriptors.

As we learned while developing the SWOT grid, it is not essential that everyone on the marketing team agree with the inclusion of every vivid descriptor. Remember, the same balloting process used to create the SWOT analysis can be used to evaluate the efficacy of individual descriptors.

As you gather and evaluate potential vivid descriptors, remember to keep their number as small as possible. Five or six descriptors is usually more than adequate. Any more and the list becomes unmanageable.

It is also important that the list of descriptors serve the entire institution—not just recruiting. Good descriptors and points of pride can also have a catalytic effect on fund raising and alumni relations.

Third, try to develop a list of descriptors that have the potential to differentiate you from your competition. Vivid descriptors should be just that—vivid. If they are too similar to those used by the competition, you have lost an important opportunity to distinguish yourself in the marketplace.

Finally, don't be afraid to launch some trial balloons with internal and external constituents. There is nothing wrong with asking potential donors or prospective students, for example, what they think of your list of vivid descriptors. Pretesting the relevance and efficacy of these descriptors with potential target audiences is a smart move.

Get the nod

Like the SWOT grid, the list of vivid descriptors must be presented to the president for her or his approval. After he or she approves them, it is time to begin developing your marketing goals. Before doing that, however, add the list of vivid descriptors to your marketing planning notebook. You have just completed the fourth component of your marketing plan.

Step 15: Establish marketing goals

The next step in the creation of your marketing plan is to coalesce the SWOT grid into a cogent set of manageable marketing goals.

Some may prefer to skip to the creation of a list of target audiences in Step 16 and then outline the marketing goals. It really doesn't matter which you do first. Marketing goals and target audiences are a chicken-and-egg kind of issue. It's hard to know which comes first, but the practical reality is that you need both before you can proceed with writing marketing action plans.

As we learned in the introduction to this chapter, a marketing goal is something

you wish to accomplish. Sometimes called an objective, a good marketing goal is designed to build on a strength, address a weakness, realize an opportunity, or neutralize a threat.

Sample marketing goals might include these:

- Increase annual fund participation from 57 percent to 70 percent over five years.
- Increase the number of freshmen from our primary draw from 385 to 425 over the next three years.
- Raise the first-year to second-year retention rate from 76 percent to 85 percent over three years.

Characteristics of good marketing goals

Good marketing goals have specific characteristics that make them easier to conceptualize, achieve, and evaluate. Good marketing goals are:

- Important, usually based on your institution's mission and vision;
- Derived from your prioritized situational analysis;
- Founded on research;
- Realistic and achievable;
- As quantifiable as possible;
- Unambiguous and narrowly focused; and
- Usually directed at one or more clearly defined target audiences.

"One tangible goal of marketing is that it changes the behavior of people."

Good marketing goals are important and usually based on your institution's mission and vision. Because marketing often means the reallocation of institutional resources, the marketing goal must be of sufficient importance to justify the effort.

Marketing goals should be derived from the prioritized institutional analysis. If the genesis of the goal cannot be found in your SWOT, either the SWOT was not complete or the goal needs some other rationale for inclusion.

Good marketing goals are also founded on research. Research not only helps shape the marketing goal but provides the necessary baseline data so you can effectively measure progress in meeting the goal. Additionally, marketing goals should be as quantifiable as possible. If you can't quantify, it will be very difficult to evaluate your progress.

Marketing goals are realistic and achievable. Nothing is more frustrating to a marketing team and campus community than a set of marketing goals that are clearly beyond their reach.

Marketing goals should also be unambiguous and narrowly focused. The descriptive terminology should be clearly defined, and the intent of the goals should be obvious.

Well-developed marketing goals are also directed at one or more target audiences. Remember, one tangible goal of marketing is that it changes the behavior of people.

Sample marketing goals

Let's look at some sample marketing goals as they were presented in their marketing plans. Consider these goals from a private liberal arts college in the Midwest:

1. Increase endowment.
2. Maintain enrollment.
3. Establish the college as a cultural, economic, and intellectual resource in key market areas.
4. Improve physical plant.
5. Develop a timely, accurate internal and external communication strategy.

Goals from a public university in the East include these:

1. Institutionalize the marketing function within the university.
2. Increase overall student enrollment.
3. Develop and use a family of video products to recruit students.
4. Develop an integrated marketing information system to assess and market the university.
5. Further refine and develop the university's positioning.
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive advertising strategy.
7. Develop a comprehensive means of tracking customer satisfaction.
8. Encourage and support decentralized marketing-oriented activities within the respective colleges and their departments.

As you look at these goals, several common characteristics become apparent. First, many of them are nonquantitative. Raise the endowment from what to what over what period of time? Increase enrollment from how many to how many? Without specifics, there is no accountability, and the goals will be difficult if not impossible to evaluate.

Second, people sometimes confuse goals with strategies. For example, the public university in the East has as a goal the hiring of a marketing director. Actually, the goal is to strengthen marketing within the institution. One strategy, then, is to hire a director. That same institution has as an action the creation of a comprehensive advertising strategy. This is correctly identified as a strategy or action to accomplish the goal of developing a strong institutional image or perhaps enhancing enrollment.

Third, notice the different emphases of these two sets of goals. The first set embraces a larger set of institutional needs and priorities and appears to be tightly bound to the strategic plan. I suspect these goals were developed by a campus-wide marketing team. The second set, however, is much more narrowly focused on student recruiting and retention. I suspect these goals were developed by a committee of people who work in these areas almost exclusively. These goals are more tactical and technical and do not have the same spirit demonstrated in the first set.

Now let's look at some marketing goals from a private institution in the West:

1. We will raise undergraduate enrollment by 20 percent, from 3,800 to 4,560, over the next six years.

2. We will increase freshman-to-sophomore retention from 63 percent to 75 percent over five years.
3. We will establish a campus culture that stresses the following qualities:
   - Outstanding academic quality
   - Programs and instruction that lead to jobs and graduate school
   - A friendly, safe, fun, and nurturing campus that stresses participation and individual responsibility and accountability
   - The economic, cultural, and social impact our institution has made and will continue to make in the region
4. We will establish a strong institutional image that focuses on a 150-mile radius. This image will stress the qualities outlined in Goal 3.
5. We will develop a comprehensive customer-service program that embraces prospective and current students, faculty, staff, administrators, and visitors to the campus.
6. We will increase annual fund participation from 39 percent to 50 percent over three years, and increase the average contribution from $22 to $45.

These goals are different for a number of important reasons. First, they all begin with "we." This is a small but significant point. The institution is stating from the beginning that these are our goals—not merely the goals of the marketing team.

Second, the tone of these goals is invigorating. There is a sense of mission and vision here. These goals are strategic and far-reaching.

Third, as much as is reasonably possible, these goals are built on baseline data. Enrollment growth and annual fund growth and participation levels are clearly documented. The radius of the institutional image is clearly outlined.

Fourth, these goals are both internal and external. Goal 3 outlines campus values, while Goal 4 stresses the promotion or marketing of these values to external audiences.

Integrating old goals with new ones

It is perfectly acceptable to include in your new marketing plan goals you are already working on, as long as those old goals survive the critical light of the SWOT and still meet the criteria of good marketing goals.

Work from the general to the specific

It is very helpful at this point to work from the general to the specific. I know, for example, that most marketing goals focus on one or more of the following general topic areas:

- Recruiting
- Retention
- Image building
- Fund raising
- Technology enhancement

- Curriculum evaluation and enhancement
- Facilities planning
- Customer service

I often ask clients to establish a general list like this from their SWOT. At this stage I am not interested in the nuances and subtleties of exact goals; rather, I want to help establish the range of goals they are considering. Once the general list of goals is developed, it is relatively easy to define goals in greater detail. This is an enormously effective way to establish the rough list of goals quickly and to keep up momentum.

Don't worry about wordsmithing

As you establish your list, it is tempting to debate and craft the exact, final wording of each one. If you do this, you're sure to lose momentum while getting bogged down by terms and definitions. At this stage, focus on the big concepts and themes and try to leave the wordsmithing until the general list is developed.

Keep the number of marketing goals manageable

As you assemble the goals, let me offer three quick final reminders. First, keep the number of goals as small as possible. As a start, I suggest no more than five or six. Any more and you run the risk of too large and cumbersome a plan. The only time to consider more goals is if you already have some experience with marketing plans and/or your SWOT analysis clearly indicates that you need more goals.

Second, try to keep the goals straightforward and universally accepted. If you can, begin with goals that most campus constituents believe should be accomplished. Not only will this help win initial acceptance of the plan, but it will allow you to gain experience and credibility you can use later as you seek to address more complex, perhaps controversial goals.

And finally, consider the timing. It is sometimes wise to implement some goals earlier in the plan and hold some until later. A good marketing plan is designed to run for five or more years. During the first couple of years, focus on goals that most constituents feel positive about. This will help you gain both credibility and momentum.

Underpromise and overdeliver

Remember, among some stakeholders, particularly those critical of the marketing process, you and your marketing plan are much more likely to be judged by what you failed to accomplish than by what you did accomplish.

The goal-approval process

Just as you sought approval for the SWOT grid and the vivid descriptors, you must now seek the president's buy-in for your list of marketing goals.

As you discuss the list of marketing goals with your president, keep in mind the following.

First, these goals represent a long-term commitment. Chances are your institution will be working with these goals for at least five years—probably longer. They deserve careful thought, even debate, before they are accepted.

Second, these marketing goals are a logical and obvious extension of the president's vision. He or she should be able to see clearly how they advance the institution's vision of success. If the vision cannot be seen in the marketing goals, something is wrong.

Third, goals clearly set a direction. By default, they also outline directions not taken. Fourth, these goals represent the likelihood of significant, usually very significant, financial expenditures. Often the funding of these goals will call for reallocation from elsewhere around campus. The goals must be of sufficient value to both the institution and the president so he or she is willing to face those battles confident of their importance.

One note: Early in the planning process the president committed to a rough budget. If in your opinion the goals he or she approves at this stage will require an appreciably larger budget, you must mention this. Failure to do so will greatly hinder your ability to capture the necessary dollars later in the planning process. It is better to have the president commit to a new amount now—when excitement is running high—than to try to get a new budget commitment later. If possible, get this commitment in writing from either the president or the chief finance officer. I have learned the hard way that memories often fail and priorities shift when it comes to the delivery of promised funds.

And finally, these goals also represent a commitment of time and prestige. They are a very obvious and very public declaration of intent.

Tweaking

In all likelihood the president will ask for a change or two in your list of goals. Perhaps he will question how they were prioritized or times set; maybe she wants some different wording. In most cases these changes are easily accommodated. However, if the president calls for major changes that seem to counter the previously approved SWOT grid, you have a problem. The marketing champion needs to have a private meeting with the president to discuss his or her reasoning, degree of commitment to the planning process, and degree of commitment to funding the plan once it is finished.

After the marketing goals have been approved, add them to the marketing planning notebook. This is the fifth component of the marketing plan.

Step 16: Clarify target audiences

For our purposes, a target audience is the person or group whose behavior or attitude you wish to change or whom you wish to influence or inform. Table 8-8 shows some oft-targeted audiences in higher education.

Table 8-8.
Potential Target Audiences

Students	College or University	External: Fund raising	External: Other
Current students	Faculty	Current donors: major	Parents
Prospective undergraduate, graduate, and continuing-education students	Staff	Current donors: minor	Legislators
Inquiring students	Administrators	Former donors	Church leaders
Applicants	Alumni	Prospective donors	Community residents
Matriculants	Trustees	Foundations	Community leaders
Nonmatriculants			Business leaders
Withdrawing students			High school contacts
Students of color			Media
International students			

Take the time to define your target audiences carefully. For example, if you include faculty, are you including part-timers as well as full-timers? If you are going to focus on alumni, do you include those alumni who didn't earn a degree as well as those who did?

As you think about potential target audiences, review Chapter 6. Chances are one of the segmenting strategies outlined there will help you define target audiences more critically.

The big questions

You will probably quickly find yourself with 15 to 20 likely candidates. This is OK—for now. After you establish this initial list, ask yourself the following questions. Of these audiences, which ones . . .

- Have you defined as critically as possible?
- Were consistently highlighted in the situational analysis?
- Have the most potential to advance the vision significantly?
- Are you able to realistically serve?
- Reside in your primary recruiting region?
- Are most advanced on the six-stage behavioral matrix?
- Are merely loud and persistent rather than truly important?

Qualify, qualify, qualify

As you and your marketing team think through the answers to these questions, you'll find yourself paring your list of target audiences. Ideally, you want to emerge with a list of five to seven, with each audience highly qualified according to one or more of

Table 8-9.
Qualification Variables

Target Audience	Qualification
Prospective students	Fit academic profile or profile to which you aspire, including segment of full- and fuller-pay students. Focus on students in primary and secondary recruiting regions.
Current students	Students who fit the profile of your graduates—those most likely to persist.
Faculty and staff	Not just full-time faculty, but part-time and adjunct faculty as well. All staff, especially those who interact with students or such key external constituencies as donors, community residents, or media.
Opinion leaders	Often called "movers and shakers." These people include not only the historic power structure in a community or region but the emerging power structure as well. Your development office should have identified these people.
Donors	Have a history or potential of giving. Have access to resources or to a person or entity that has resources.
Alumni	All alumni are important, but you should focus on those who fit one or more of these categories: alumni 1) who help you recruit, 2) who donate or have the clear potential to donate, 3) who have access to corporate wealth or power, 4) who participate in alumni activities, and 5) who are notable or powerful. Ideally your marketing strategies will help you move alumni to one or more of these categories.
Educational, science, business, and sports editors, writers, and reporters	You are not interested in all media—only the specific subsets that cater to a particular aspect of your institution. Breaking the media down into types makes them much easier to conceptualize and deal with.

the variables outlined in Table 8-9.

Sample target audiences

A private, church-related institution in Iowa targeted the following audiences in its marketing plan:

- Prospective college students
- Parents of prospective students
- Media
- Alumni and friends
- Business and professional leaders
- The general public

A large public institution in Ohio created this list:

- Prospective undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education students

- Parents of traditional-age prospective students
- High school influencers—guidance counselors, teachers, club advisers
- Community residents within 75 miles of the institution
- The education, business, sports, and science press
- Alumni
- Donors

Obtain approval

As with the SWOT, vivid descriptors, and marketing goals, you must now ask the president to approve your list of target audiences. This is the sixth component of the marketing plan.

Step 17: Write marketing action plans

The next step in the planning process is to create strategies or marketing action plans that will help you accomplish your goals. If goals are what you want done and target audiences are the people at whom goals are directed, then the marketing action plan is the means by which goals are accomplished.

In essence, the marketing action plan, or MAP, is a simple device that tells who will be doing what as you execute strategies. Consider, for example, the following goal:

> **Increase freshman-to-sophomore retention from 66 percent to 75 percent over five years**

This goal is straightforward, has clear definitions, and is eminently quantifiable. To accomplish this goal we develop marketing action plans that will be directed at the following four target audiences:

- Freshmen
- Faculty
- Staff
- Parents

After establishing the goal and target audiences, let's outline a handful of action-plan topics that will help accomplish the marketing goal:

- Define retention appropriately for each type of student—traditional, nontraditional, and graduate—and use this definition consistently.
- Conduct extensive research of current students' needs and expectations and of why students withdraw.
- Develop a more effective freshman orientation program.
- Target at-risk students.
- Implement a mentoring program.
- Create a profile of students who are more likely to persist in the funnel.
- Document to faculty the dollar and nondollar cost of each lost student.

Quick Glance

Quick Glance: Goals and Target Audiences

Goals are the things you want done; target audiences are the people whom you hope to affect with your goals. Let's say one of your marketing goals is to improve your institution's image. Because images rest in people's minds, you need to determine the target audiences you wish to influence, persuade, or inform. As you think about target audiences, it is very important to determine where these people live. Often marketing plans struggle because they are directed at too large a geography. One excellent way to get a better sense of your primary marketing geography is to create a map with software such as MapLinx or a geography database such as Access for Windows 97. These software packages will allow you to import the addresses of current students, alumni, and donors onto a single map. By using a different symbol for each group, you can get a clearer sense of where key overlaps occur. This will help you define your marketing geography.

Quick Glance

Strategies and Action Plans

A strategy is something you do to help accomplish a goal. A marketing action plan is the same thing as a strategy, though often in more detail. Whereas a strategy may describe what is to be done, a marketing action plan enumerates which goal the strategy is designed to help accomplish and then outlines who will be doing what when. For example, a strategy might be to hold an open house. The action plan would outline who will conduct it, when, what it will entail, how much it will cost, and so on.

- Offer an honors college with special orientation, advising, programs, scholarships, and privileges.
- Develop aggressive residence-life programs; use residence assistants as part of an early-warning system.
- Implement a campus ombudsman program.
- Discount tuition by five percent for sophomores, juniors, and seniors.
- Offer "one-stop shopping," a place where students can register, pay fees, and deal with financial aid.
- Increase quality of residence life.
- Train, motivate, and reward advisers and make them accountable for their mistakes.

Each of these strategies would be accomplished through the creation of one or more marketing action plans.

Goals, target audiences, and marketing action plans

We have just worked through the creation of a single marketing action plan that will support one marketing goal.

At this point it is important to again affirm the relationship among goals, target audiences, and marketing action plans. Remember:

- One goal can be directed at many audiences. For example, image goals may affect donors, community residents, prospective students, high school influencers, and so on. See Figure 8-1.
- One goal may require multiple marketing action plans, and these may run concurrently and sequentially. Building a strong annual fund, for example, may involve a plan for research that leads, later, to other plans involving communication with alumni donors, alumni events, changes in the alumni magazine, and the like.

Figure 8-1.
Directing Your Goals

Quick Glance

Marketing Planning Software

I strongly recommend the use of marketing software. Although the bulk of your marketing plan—the mission, vision of success, situational analysis, vivid descriptors, goals, and target audiences—may be developed with a good word-processing package such as Word or WordPerfect, the creation and monitoring of your marketing action plans (MAPs), timelines, and budgets require the use of special planning software such as SureTrack, ManagePro, Fast Track Schedule, or On Target. Good marketing planning software is "linked." For example, it allows you to develop a template that includes the activity, who will do it, timeline, and cost. I can then create one master timeline that includes all the MAPs. Or I can assemble one budget or list all the MAPs that Jennifer or Tom is responsible for. Furthermore, if I make any changes to a MAP such as timing, cost, or who is responsible, that change is made automatically in every part of the plan. Of course, it is possible to create an effective marketing plan using only a word processor. But planning software will save you time. This software has a bit of a learning curve, so be prepared to spend some time figuring out its nuances.

Table 8-10.
Marketing Action Plan

Title of marketing action plan	
Description of the MAP	
Which goal(s) the plan supports	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Target audiences	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Action plan step-by-step	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Timeline	Begin date: End date:
Budget	$ $ $ $ $
MAP assigned to	
Evaluation mechanisms	
When to evaluate	
Who evaluates	
Report results to	

Marketing action plan template

It is useful to develop a standard template for all your marketing action plans. Some templates are fairly simple; others present the MAP in more detail. At minimum, a MAP template needs to describe the activity, when it will begin and end, who will be responsible, and how much it will cost. I have used variations of the template in Table 8-10 with great success.

Let's take a minute to detail a marketing action plan for one of the strategies outlined above: the creation of a mentoring program. See Table 8-11.

Working with action-plan topics

Earlier, when discussing creation of the list of marketing goals, I suggested you work with general goals and leave details and wordsmithing for later. I make this same recommendation here. Creation of your MAPs will proceed much more quickly if you work with MAP titles and avoid detail until later. Once the marketing team has

Table 8-11.
Marketing Action Plan for a Mentoring Program

Title of marketing action plan	Implement a mentoring program
Description of the MAP	The action plan will detail the creation of a mentoring program for entering freshmen.
Which goal(s) the plan supports	1. Increase freshman-to-sophomore retention from 66 percent to 75 percent over five years.
Target audiences	1. Freshmen
Action plan step-by-step	1. Examine mentoring programs at other colleges and universities 2. Undertake a literature search to review the pros and cons of mentoring programs. 3. Discuss initial program concepts with the vice president for student affairs. 4. Present the preliminary plan, budget, and timeline to senior administrators . 5. Finalize plan. 6. Launch the program.
Timeline	Begin date: April 15 End date (to launch program): August 25
Budget	$1,500 to study programs at other institutions $500 for student help for literature review $20,000 to fund program for one year
MAP assigned to	Rachel H.
Evaluation mechanisms	Creation of initial plan, implementation of final plan, freshman focus groups, impact of mentoring program on freshman-to-sophomore retention
When to evaluate	May 15– initial program concepts June 15– preliminary plan, budget, and timeline July 30– finalize plan August 25– launch program
Who evaluates	Annette S.
Report results to	Steve K.

assembled the complete range of MAP topics, it can make some preliminary decisions about which MAPs to flesh out.

From software to paper and back to software again

To facilitate MAP creation, I suggest distributing paper copies of the MAP template to each member of the marketing team. Team members, often working with their constituencies, will develop the initial MAPs. The marketing planning team's secretary then assembles these hard copies.

The use of planning software

Let me illustrate the use of planning software. Suppose, for example, our SWOT supports creating two marketing goals:

- Establish the on- and off-campus visibility of a new president.

- Increase internal communication.

In response to these goals, the marketing team—or the subset charged with developing action plans for this activity—recommends the following:

- Create a quarterly monthly newsletter for all faculty and staff.
- Develop a campus-wide computer bulletin board and update it weekly.
- Designate a campus ombudsman.
- Implement a campus suggestion box.
- Initiate a quarterly president's newsletter to faculty, staff, and students.
- Write a six-times-yearly president's column for the student newspaper.
- Implement a twice-yearly "ask senior administrators" brown-bag luncheon.
- Launch a three-times-yearly audiotape from the president to board members.
- Launch a twice-yearly audiotape from the president to community movers and shakers.
- Hold one-on-one meetings with the president for each academic department.
- Hold an open house at the president's home.
- Manage by walking around.
- Develop a topical forum series:
  - Forum 1: The changing marketplace
  - Forum 2: Strategic planning
  - Forum 3: Innovations in education
  - Forum 4: Capital and technology planning

Now let's use planning software to create a MAP template that includes the following:

- The name of the MAP
- The name of the person for completing the MAP
- The cost of completing the MAP
- The date it will be completed

With planning software, it is easy to assemble the details of individual MAPs so that you can more completely keep track of who is doing what, when. For example, let's consider a plan to enhance the image of a new president. See Figure 8-2.

Using planning software, we have developed a plan that will run for one academic year. As you can see in Figure 8-2, marketing action plan variables include:

- Activity name
- Manager (of that activity)
- Cost
- Start date
- Finish date

Planning software easily coordinates the action-plan variables. More importantly, it also allows you to sort plan activities by cost, start date, or end date. For example, you could pull up all the activities that cost more than $1,500 or are scheduled to be completed in the first half of the academic year.

In addition, good planning software allows you to print individual GANTT* charts for each activity manager. For example, you could print out a calendar that includes only activities that Gwen is undertaking. See Figure 8-3.

And finally, planning software allows you to summarize all MAPs on one page, thereby giving a quick overview of the entire plan.

All good planning software includes a provision for tracking dollars. Some software also keeps a running tally on dollars spent and reminds you if projects are running ahead or behind budget.

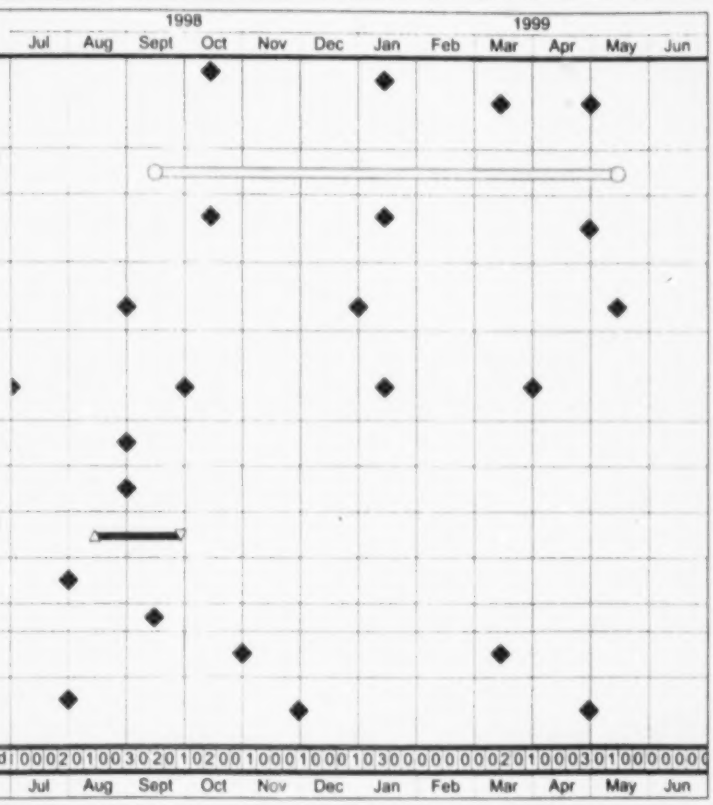
Even the most basic software plots on a calendar when each action plan will be accomplished. By simply moving the symbol of the activity, you may change when something is to occur. Furthermore, by moving the timing symbol on the GANTT chart, you change all references to that activity everywhere in the plan.

The calendar function of planning software also allows you to display and print any portions of the plan you wish. For example, you can print the MAPs for July, one quarter (July, August, and September), an entire year, or multiple years.

* A GANTT chart is a chronological overview of a series of activities in which each is represented as a bar or symbol on a calendar. GANTT charts allow you to see at a glance when everything is happening.

Figure 8-2.
GANTT Chart

Activity Name	Manager	Cost	Start Date	Finish Date
4 x yearly topical forms	Bob	$6,000	10/15/98 1/15/99 3/15/99 5/1/99	
1:1 mtg with department heads	Bob	$500	9/15/98	5/15/99
Pres 3x column in stu newspaper	Gwen	$0	10/15/98 1/15/99 4/30/99	
Pres 3x yearly ltr to faculty	Gwen	$600	9/1/98 1/1/99 5/15/99	
4x yearly newsletter to all faculty and staff	Gwen	$800	7/1/98 10/1/98 1/15/99 4/1/99	
Implement campus suggestion box/QA	Jim	$250	9/1/98	
Designate campus ombudsman	Jim	$6,500	9/1/98	
Develop computer bulletin board	Maggie	$2,500	8/15/98	9/29/98
Holiday party at pres home	Suzanne	$1,500	8/1/98	
Bar-b-que at pres home	Suzanne	$1,500	9/15/98	
Twice yearly brownbag for stu and faculty	Suzanne	$300	11/1/98 3/15/99	
Pres 3x yearly audio tape to board members	Tom	$1,500	8/1/98 11/30/98 4/30/99	
		$21,950		



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Activity Name	Manager	Cost	Start Date	Finish Date	1998 Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	1999 Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Pres 3x column in stu newspaper	Gwen	$0	10/15/98 1/15/99 4/30/99					◆			◆			◆		
Pres 3x yearly ltr to faculty	Gwen	$600	9/1/98 1/1/99 5/15/99				◆				◆				◆	
4x yearly newsletter to all faculty and staff	Gwen	$800	7/1/98 10/1/98 1/15/99 4/1/99		◆			◆			◆			◆		
				Untitled												
		$1,400			Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun

Figure 8-3.
GANTT Chart for Individual Activity Manager

Step 18: Establish budget

The next step in the marketing planning process is to create a rough budget. Table 8-12 outlines a few resource allocation strategies, some good and some not so good: The worst resource allocation strategies ignore the planning process, are haphazard and arbitrary. The best, however, are planning-based and focus on institutional priorities. The worst are based on anecdotal data and impressions, while the best are based on mission, vision, and research.

A reasonable budgeting process

Two variables must be reconciled as part of the budgeting process: the rough budget established by your president at the outset, and the dollars required to accomplish the assembled MAPs.

With luck, these two amounts won't be too different. Chances are, though, that your MAPs require more money than your president anticipated. If this is the case, you must begin to make your case for more dollars. Thankfully, you will enter this discussion with two important assets: Your chief finance officer has been involved in the planning process, and the president has approved, as the plan progressed, the SWOT, goals, and target audiences.

Before discussing the actual budget, work carefully with the president through the SWOT, marketing goals, and target audiences that he or she previously approved. Show how the MAPs are designed to accomplish the marketing goals and, by extension, help achieve the president's vision.

If some of the goals and action plans will help increase revenue through the annual fund, a capital campaign, or tuition, give some reasonable projections. Remind the president that although the plan represents a multiyear commitment, chances are that plan expenditures will decrease once its effect begins to be felt. It is generally less expensive to maintain marketing efforts than to start them.

Even with the most ardent support of your president, you will probably have to go back and trim the budget. As you do so, focus on the prioritized marketing goals. Make every effort to preserve dollars, and the activities they represent, in the areas that matter most to the institution.

Table 8-12.
Resource Allocation Strategies

Worst Resource Allocation Strategies	*Best Resource Allocation Strategies*
Spend what you spent last year.	Develop a strategic marketing plan that links goals, strategies, and tactics to desired outcomes.
Match the competition.	Determine annual plan that links priorities to results and resources.
Rely on consultant's suggestions.	Focus on 20/80s and not 80/20s (meaning the 20 things that accomplish 80 percent of your goals rather than the 80 things that accomplish 20 percent).
Rely on vendor bids.	Evaluate, reprioritize, and reallocate.
Determine what new efforts cost, and respond only if additional funding is available.	
Assign resources to what we feel is important and we enjoy doing.	

Source: Laurence Smith, Eastern Michigan University

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Remember one of the fundamental rules of budgeting: Put a little extra in earlier so you can take a little more out later.

Budgeting hints

With tight resources strangling most campuses, budgeting and cost issues will not go away, especially when marketing dollars are increasingly reallocated from other institutional sources. Although there are no absolutes to help you budget realistically, several guidelines will help.

First, consider the levels of image difficulty and budget accordingly. It is easiest and least expensive to maintain an already good image. It is more expensive to create a strong image. And it is most expensive to change a bad image.

Second, remember that as your image strategies begin to work, you can scale back their intensity. Once the image is established, it takes fewer dollars and less effort to maintain it.

Third, hire good people. To save a few dollars, institutions sometimes hire inexperienced people to execute their marketing strategies. This is false economy. Though you may save on salaries, the mistakes, missed deadlines, and lost opportunities will cost you dearly. I recommend biting the budgetary bullet and hiring people with experience. The knowledge and understanding of seasoned professionals will make these people a bargain.

Fourth, support your plan with an adequate budget. It is far better to do fewer things well than to try to do a multitude of things poorly. Rather than underfund high school visits so you can place limited advertising, it is probably better to halt advertising and spend the money necessary to visit priority high schools.

Fifth, manage the marketing plan. Remember the college that overspent its video production budget by 50 percent—then had a wonderful video but no money to duplicate or distribute it.

Finally, establish solid, measurable marketing goals and evaluate progress through systematic market research.

Step 19: Debug the plan

The final step is to debug the plan. Review each component. Make sure the SWOT is complete. Clarify that the goals are well-conceived and important. Working from the individual and collective MAPs and the assembled GANTT charts, evaluate the following:

- Are you spending 80 percent of your time and resources on the 20 most important activities?
- Is every MAP clearly supporting a goal? If it isn't, take it out or at least highlight it for cutting if a budget crunch occurs
- Is the viability of each MAP clearly borne out in the SWOT?

- Has enough time been allocated for each MAP? Remember, things take longer the first time through.
- Are the budgeted dollars realistic? If not, costs will cartwheel out of control.
- Are too few people doing too many things? All major administrative departments should be involved in executing action plans.
- Are first things being done first? Do what needs to be done now so that other things can be done later.
- Are early MAPs primed for success? For morale and political reasons, make sure some of your early MAPs are highly successful and highly visible.

If your MAPs survive after you ask and answer these questions, you have gone a long way to developing a sound series of MAPs. Because you have used planning software, you can also run a total budget and timeline. When these are done, add them to the marketing planning notebook. Congratulations, you've written a marketing plan. Now it's time to put it into action.

9

> **"What gets measured is what gets done."**
> —Unknown

Execution and Evaluation

Whereas Chapter 8 worked carefully through the steps required to actually write the marketing plan, this chapter will give you insights into executing and evaluating your plan and help you develop a strategy for refining the ongoing planning process.

In this chapter we will address the following three steps:

- Execute the plan.
- Evaluate and modify the plan.
- Hold a planning postmortem.

Step 20: Execute the plan

As you look at your completed plan, you will probably feel a bit anxious about implementing it. Before you panic, reconsider the master calendar you just assembled. The master calendar is more than a summary of all your marketing activities; it is a chronological guide of what should be done and when. By following your calendar, you keep the execution of the plan on time and on target.

The use of planning software

If you used planning software to assemble the plan, executing it will be even easier.

Planning software such as OnTarget, ManagePro, or Fast Track Schedule will allow you to establish "tickles" for each MAP. Rather than waiting for the due date, you can program your plan's software to remind you to check on specific MAPs at whatever point in their development you choose. Let's say that a MAP for creating a media database requires the following four steps to be accomplished over a two-month period:

- Choose software.
- Design database template.
- Gather media directories.
- Input data.

Software will allow you to monitor whether the person responsible for the action plan has completed each step, or it can remind you to check the person's progress at the halfway point. It will also allow you to organize MAPs by individual or by due date.

The key to keeping things on schedule is to not let a few missed deadlines derail the entire plan. In many respects, monitoring the execution of a marketing plan is similar to serving as an air-traffic controller. Most action plans will run on time. Some may be delayed, postponed, or rescheduled. And every now and then, for the good of the entire plan, you might have to cancel a MAP or two.

Most of the time, executing the plan is just this simple. Keep in mind, though, that a good marketing plan is fluid. Though it must have enough structure so people know what is happening, it must also be able to accommodate, even anticipate, changes and opportunities. You must always be willing to sacrifice existing MAPs if an even bigger opportunity . . . or crisis . . . arises.

Step 21: Evaluate and modify the plan

Types of evaluation

As you begin to execute the marketing plan, you are also beginning to evaluate and modify it. Evaluation occurs along two dimensions. First, you might evaluate whether a MAP is on schedule or completed and whether it ran on, under, or over budget. This is evaluation at its most basic.

However, you must also be prepared to determine whether the MAP helped accomplish the overarching goal or goals and even whether the goals themselves have been accomplished. This is a higher order, more complex type of evaluation.

As in the completion of a single MAP, you might assume at least at one level that if all the MAPs are completed, the goal was accomplished. However, even if you accomplish all your MAPs, you may or may not have accomplished your goal. This requires a different level of evaluation.

Measuring progress against the baseline

If your marketing goals are quantifiable and built on baseline data, it is relatively easy to measure progress. Consider the following example. In 1996, some 26 percent of your alumni contribute to the annual fund. One of your marketing goals is to increase that figure to 43 percent over three years. Action plans to help the institution meet this goal will be implemented.

Now let's skip ahead to 1999. We discover that this year 46 percent of alumni contributed to the annual fund. Was the goal accomplished? Of course. This example outlines the utility of baseline data. Without concrete baseline data to show where you started, it will be very difficult to evaluate progress. At the same time, your goals should be as quantified as possible. Without quantifiable goals, measuring progress will always be a guess at best.

Adding and modifying action plans

The ongoing evaluation may also lead you to the realization that action plans sometimes need to be added or modified. The odds are great that you, someone from the marketing planning team, or someone else on campus will have a great idea for a new action plan or whole series of action plans long after the plan is complete. This is OK. Remember, the written plan is less important than the planning process that accommodates this kind of modification.

Changing needs and priorities

Action plans and goals must be evaluated and sometimes modified in light of changing institutional needs and priorities. It is very important for the institution to develop ongoing mechanisms to evaluate changes and trends in the marketplace. A successful planning process recognizes the need for continued monitoring of internal and external marketing circumstances even after the plan is written.

Keeping track of dollars

Earlier we saw the need to monitor budgets. Again, good planning software will help track spent and unspent dollars. The ability to monitor costs is also useful if you notice that an important action plan or series of them is running over budget and you need to shift dollars from other, perhaps less important, action plans.

I know from experience that it is a much better management strategy to shift dollars within the plan than to ask for more money. This is especially true early in the plan's execution. After you have a record of success, it will be easier to ask for more money.

Keep raising the bar

One final thought about evaluation. You will find that the best goals are always a little bit beyond your reach. For example, let's say your goal is to increase retention from 45 percent to 60 percent over three years. After executing a number of MAPs, you find

you've accomplished that. However, it is never a good strategy to rest on this accomplishment. Instead, after a period, raise the goal.

Asking the big question

Although achieving quantifiable goals is extraordinarily important, the overall success of your marketing plan can be evaluated, in part, by answering this question:

Has the financial condition of the college or university improved since it began marketing?

Some people will find this question overly simplistic, even crass. But think about it. Most marketing goals have as their logical end the improvement of the college or university's financial condition. You recruit more students because of the revenue they bring. You attract excellent faculty because they will attract better students and more grant money. Stronger images attract more students and donors. Satisfied students stay longer. Happy alumni contribute more. Tightening bonds with a local community will help preserve the flow of resources.

Is this oversimplified? Sure. But the point is an important one. One way to measure the overall effectiveness of your marketing plan is to see whether the institution is better off afterward than before.

Step 22: Hold a planning postmortem

Once the plan is under way and you have had a chance to reflect on the progress of individual MAPs and the overall planning process, it is time to hold a planning postmortem. The postmortem is designed to help you evaluate the process you just completed so your next planning cycle will be more effective and efficient.

There is no prescriptive postmortem process. The goal is to gather as much insight and information as possible. To this end, it is often best to begin with the president, the senior administrators, or both.

Begin at the top

After the plan has been under way for a period, ask the president how she or he feels about the planning process and the resulting plan. Was the president comfortable with her or his role? Was the budgeting method sensitive to other campus needs? Was the approval process well-engineered? Did the overall process live up to the president's expectations? What would he or she like done differently the next time around? Ask good questions. Listen closely. And probe.

Query the planning team

As part of the postmortem, it is also a good idea to spend time with the planning team. Take members out to lunch and query them about the planning process. What did they like and not like? What would they do differently? What do they wish they

could undo? What was their favorite part of the planning process? What part surpassed their expectations? What part did they like least? Was enough time spent on each step; was too much time spent? How did the process affect their interaction with colleagues not directly involved?

Discuss each step. Focus on how the processes associated with each step could have been improved. Ask questions like these:

- Was the process empowered correctly? Did it have the support of the campus community?
- Did the team understand the purpose and communicate it to internal constituencies?
- Was the right champion chosen?
- Were the right people on the team? Who should be on the next team?
- Did the team function as a team—or a committee?
- Were planning relationships and terminology understood?
- Did the team and the campus agree on and understand the unchangeables?
- Did the team and the campus establish a range of possibilities?
- Did the team make the correct decision to stay inside or go outside?
- Was the planning process workable?
- Was the SWOT analysis comprehensive enough? Too comprehensive? Did the process solicit enough input and provide adequate opportunity for synthesis? Did anyone feel left out?
- Did the team have solid data with which to work?
- Was the process for finalizing and prioritizing the SWOT appropriate?
- Are the vivid descriptors relevant, reflective of the institution, and important?
- Are the marketing goals significant? Will they unify the campus? Will they move it forward? Are they achievable?
- Are the target audiences clearly defined? Is there consensus that they're important to the institution's future?
- Are the MAPs well-conceived, focused on the marketing goals, well-timed, and well-funded?
- Was all the promised money made available? Is the budget adequate? Is it sustainable over time?
- Was the plan debugged appropriately? Were decisions made that will improve its performance and impact?
- Is the plan's execution on time and on target?
- Are criteria, tools, and procedures in place to modify the plan as it progresses?

And don't forget to ask the team the big question:

- Was the planning process a good use of your time?

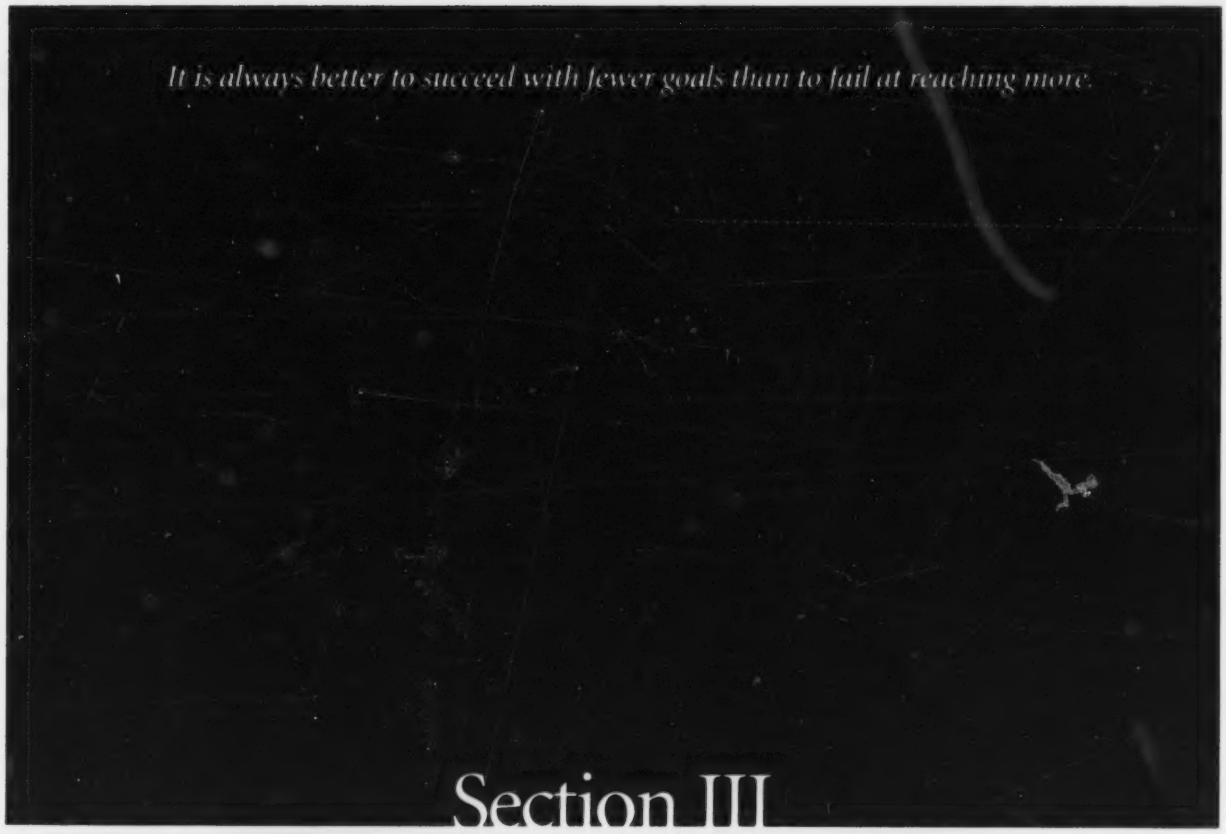
Talk to the campus community

It is also useful to talk to campus constituents. Perhaps working through the team and its liaisons with different groups, seek to answer the following questions:

- Do constituents feel that they were listened to?
- Do they feel sufficiently involved in the process?
- Do they understand the need for planning?
- Do they think their involvement was a good use of their time?
- Do they feel a sense of ownership with the plan?
- Are they committed to the plan and its success?
- Do they feel that things have improved?

And finally:

- Do they feel that marketing is/was a good use of campus resources?



Section III

Putting It All Together

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10

"Inch by inch, it's a cinch."
—Unknown

Putting It All Together

Some Thoughts and Reflections on Making Your Plan Work

We have come a long way. In Chapter 1, we established the critical case for marketing. Chapters 2 through 6 provided an extensive foundation for marketing by outlining basic and advanced marketing principles, tools, and techniques. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 presented a detailed marketing planning process. Now it is time to conclude.

Lessons learned

I have been helping colleges and universities develop marketing, recruiting, and strategic plans for nearly 20 years. During this time, I have seen dozens and dozens of institutions write and implement marketing plans. Thinking back to all the clients I have helped, I am particularly enamored with the institutions that succeeded, often with scant resources except heart and resolve. It is with some lessons learned from these institutions that I wish to close.

First, don't begin the marketing planning process unless your mandate is clear and widely accepted. The need for marketing must be articulated and understood by all major stakeholders. Whereas marketing may well be top-down, marketing efforts must be quickly assimilated by everyone at the institution. They must understand what marketing is, how it will help the institution—and themselves—and what their role is, not only in the planning process but in implementing the plan.

Generally, there are two ways to gain widespread support for marketing. First, show how changes in the marketplace will have a direct and long-term impact on the livelihood of people on campus. Second, actively involve these people in the marketing planning process. If faculty, staff, and administrators greet the decision to write a marketing plan with "here we go again," the mandate probably has not been made clear or demonstrated convincingly.

Second, administrators and faculty must be willing to make tough decisions. Many people believe, wrongly, that marketing will make problems go away, that resources will be more abundant, that decisions will be less political and choices clearer. This is seldom true, and it is especially not true early in the plan's implementation. Eventually, marketing may clarify options and deliver more resources, but the need to make tough decisions will never go away.

Third, balance the need for input with the need to act. As you proceed, you will quickly become aware of two tensions: the need to gain as much consensus as possible and the need to keep moving.

Although consensus from internal and external audiences is critical, an undue commitment to consensus can stall and even kill the marketing effort. This is especially true when there is confusion between stakeholders and target audiences and when too many groups assume that because they were asked for input, they are also part of the decision-making process. Your best strategy is to seek input from internal and external constituencies as part of situational analysis and perhaps as part of goal clarification.

Fourth, create an effective marketing team—and designate a true champion. Rather than yet another committee or task force, create and enable a marketing team. Keep in mind that talent is more important than title and that performance is more valued than position. Include the people who will actually be involved in implementing the plan, the people who will pay for the plan, and the people, especially as part of the decision-making process, who will have to defend the plan to naysayers of all stripes.

I well remember one marketing team. The seven people in the room were

extremely frustrated. The president had "told" them that they were the new marketing team, but none had any interest or real understanding of marketing. All were already overwhelmed by their other duties. Two people were vying to become executive assistant to the president. To top it off, the team's first goal, as mandated by the president, was to cut programs. What a great start.

As you build the team, remember to choose and equip a qualified champion as its leader. The champion must have the respect of the campus community, must demonstrate both a theoretical and a practical understanding of marketing, must have power and clout or access to power and clout, and must be able to lead and motivate people.

The marketing team and the champion must manage the input of the entire campus, must clarify issues and options for the senior decision-makers, and must write a plan that involves the entire campus. And once in a while, perhaps when no one is looking, they should have some fun.

Fifth, make sure everyone is using the same definition of marketing. Will the plan embrace product—what is taught? Will it include price—how much is charged? Will it incorporate place—where you do what you do? Or will it simply focus on promotion—getting the word out?

It is absolutely critical that everyone from the president on down settle on a definition of marketing. I can't tell you how frustrating it is for a marketing team to spend months writing a comprehensive plan only to be told that what the president really had in mind was promotion.

Sixth, begin with solid research and establish baselines. One of the biggest and most costly mistakes colleges and universities make is developing a marketing plan without conducting legitimate market research. They usually decide not to undertake research for two reasons: to save money and to save time. Not surprisingly, because the resulting plan is flawed at its foundation, these institutions usually spend more money and time, often after making very public mistakes, than if they conducted the research in the first place.

Not undertaking market research because you need to save money is false economy. As part of the situational analysis, you must know how prospective students, donors, business leaders, alumni, and others perceive you. You need hard data to make tough decisions. And later, when the decisions turn political, you will be glad you have solid, quantitative data on hand to justify the choices you have made. And remember, good research is more than a focus group or a conversation overheard at an alumni gathering.

As you gather data, seek to establish baselines. Determine quantitatively how you are perceived, how many alumni give, how many students come from Chicago, and the number of first-year students who persist. These baselines are critically important.

Without them it will be very difficult to measure the progress of your marketing efforts.

Seventh, recognize the importance and power of a strong institutional image. After talking to hundreds of students, alumni, donors, and parents, I am convinced that an institution's image is its most important asset. If your institution is well-known and well-respected, prospective students will respond to your search, visit your campus, and apply; donors will give and give more; and you will attract better students, better faculty, and better administrators. Strong images won't make all your problems go away, but they will increase your ability to deal with them effectively.

Eighth, quickly settle on a marketing geography. Most marketing strategies are directed at much too large a geography. Though you may recruit students from and have alumni living in all 50 states and 17 foreign countries, the majority of your students and alumni surely live closer than farther away.

One important way to improve the quality of your marketing efforts quickly is to clarify and narrow your marketing area. Begin by using geographical database software such as Access for Windows 95 or Maplinx to plot, on a map, the following data sets:

- Distribution of current alumni
- Distribution of annual fund contributors
- Distribution of current students
- Distribution of prospective students who fit your profile
- Competing colleges and universities
- Feeder high schools, if applicable
- Feeder religious institutions, if applicable

The resulting map will give you a great deal of insight into the size and vitality of your marketing geography.

As you use these data to evaluate potential marketplaces, keep in mind one final thought: It is always less expensive to market yourself closer to where you are than farther away. Distant big cities and far shores may be enticing, but you will probably win or lose the marketing battle close to home.

Ninth, establish clear, reasonable goals. This is pivotal. Many plans founder under a set of goals that even in the best of circumstances is simply unreachable.

Sometimes it is an issue of funding. A lack of money can mean that even simple marketing goals will go unmet. Sometimes it is an issue of expertise. Even the most basic goals, in the hands of an inexperienced champion, may be elusive. Sometimes, too, it is the sheer number of goals. It is always better to succeed with fewer goals than to fail at reaching more.

As you think about complexity and number of goals, keep a couple of things in mind. First, stagger your goals over a multiyear period. If you are writing a five-year plan, work on a few goals the first year and add others as the plan progresses. Second, make your early goals as universally valued as possible; this will help spread ownership. And third, make sure your goals are truly important. Good goals should have an immediate payoff for fund raising, recruiting, or both. Avoid goals with undue fluff or posturing.

Tenth, develop a handful of simple, valued messages. Several years ago I read an extraordinary book—David Ogilvy's *Olgivy On Advertising.* The author noted that most communication strategies suffer from messages that are too complex or do not include a benefit from the audience's perspective.

Ogilvy's lessons are worth remembering. Successful messages are invariably simple or broken down into simple components that are repeated often. Ogilvy's second lesson is equally important: The message must contain a benefit for the audience. If the audience can't assign a benefit to your message, the message will probably get overlooked. Students are keenly interested in academic quality, but they often define quality differently than institutions do. They want access to faculty and facilities and service. Deans and presidents, however, talk about the size of the library or percentage of faculty with terminal degrees. Certainly these are attributes of academic quality, but are they the only messages your audiences want to hear?

As you can see, crafting messages is a complex yet critically important task. It asks and answers the simple question "for what do you want to be known?" In many respects, this is the essence of marketing; it is certainly the essence of image management and positioning.

For what do you want to be known? What do you want people to think about your institution? What are the four or five words or phrases you want to pop into their minds when they hear your name? Some colleges and universities call these "points of pride." My favorite term is "vivid descriptors." What words and phrases vividly describe you to prospective donors, students, parents, community members, religious leaders, and even legislators?

Eleventh, use a complete media mix. Too often, colleges and universities unnecessarily limit their media mix to publications and a bit of direct mail because they don't understand how to develop a complete media mix.

Earlier, in our discussion of promotion, I noted that promotion involves "marketing" the other three Ps through such avenues as advertising, publications, direct mail, publicity, personal contact, and environmentals. The key, of course, is how these media are mixed. Decisions affecting the mix of your media involve answering these questions:

- Who are our target audiences?

- What are their values, attitudes, and lifestyles?
- What are the character and complexity of our messages?
- Where are our target audiences located?

As you evaluate the appropriateness of media-mix options, I suggest you carefully read the media section of any good book on advertising. This will provide a wealth of information and insight.

Twelfth, use benefit segments. Colleges and universities miss a great opportunity, and undermine their overall marketing strategy, when they fail to recognize that such large audiences as donors or prospective students are actually composed of smaller subgroups that often have very different product, price, place, and promotion needs and expectations. First defining segments and then refining benefits for them is an extremely effective marketing strategy that will have an almost immediate payoff.

Thirteenth, establish a realistic, sustainable marketing budget. One of the greatest challenges I have is helping clients reconcile everything they want to do with the amount of money they have to spend. I am always amazed at how quickly lofty marketing goals dissipate in the harsh light of budget realities. Though marketing may help increase revenues over the long run, this will occur only after initial up-front costs are paid. To reap the fund-raising and recruiting benefits of a stronger image, you must first build that image. Strong academic programs and majors will attract students only after the programs are built and publicized.

Not only must you budget significant dollars; you must make this commitment for a number of years. I have stressed this point a number of times, and it bears mentioning again. It is much better to spend $50,000 a year for five years than $250,000 for only one year. Resist the temptation to go for the big splash. You will have much more impact with a smaller campaign of longer duration.

Unfortunately, many administrators consider marketing dollars "spent" rather than "invested." I once attended a meeting of college and university business officers. One officer introduced me to a colleague, "No Way Ray," and explained that Ray's first response to every request for marketing money was no. Ray was convinced that his job was to safeguard the institution's coffers from the marauders in the marketing office. Ray had even prepared charts that showed how marketing expenditures had increased over the past several years. Unfortunately, Ray had not taken the time to show how much money these marketing efforts had returned to the institution.

Institutions that focus only on dollars spent and don't track how much those dollars return to the institution will never allocate sufficient resources to build and sustain an image and enable a marketing plan. When a friend at a college in the Midwest met resistance to his marketing efforts, he commissioned the business faculty to develop a formula whereby they could estimate how many dollars the marketing

efforts brought in. Their study revealed that each dollar spent on marketing (image-building, public relations, advertising, etc.) returned eight dollars to the institution.

Next, remember to evaluate your plan's progress. Sometimes in the push to get things done, the last thing we want to do is find out whether they are working. But evaluating progress, from a resource-management and stewardship point of view, makes sense.

As noted earlier, the best time to think about evaluation is when developing your marketing goals and action plans. If these are quantifiable and built on baseline research, evaluation will be relatively easy.

Obviously, not all goals can be measured. But effective time, money, and staff management requires that you make every attempt to calculate progress.

And finally, don't forget internal marketing. Too often when we think about marketing, we focus only on external audiences. This is a mistake. Your ability to spread ownership of the marketing planning process and the resulting plan will increase dramatically if you remember that some of your most important audiences are internal. Some may find the notion of marketing a bit unsettling. Others will be threatened by changes to their routine or areas of responsibility. Some factions may use the pretext of marketing to advance personal agendas. Others may try to obstruct the process. And the rumors and misinformation will fly.

The only effective countermeasure is a strong internal marketing program—and a chief element must be timely, accurate, continual internal communication. Keeping people informed will go a long way toward winning them over.

> **"Good things come to those who wait, but only the things left over by those who hustle."**
> —Unknown

Conclusion

The boundary-spanning process

This book was written to help you do more than simply write a marketing plan; it was written to help you develop an ongoing marketing planning process that will allow you to monitor your environment and continually refine your marketing goals and strategies.

After you carefully evaluate the data and insights obtained during the post-mortem, it is time to develop a strategy for continually monitoring your environment. Organizational theorists call this monitoring process "boundary spanning"—a wonderfully descriptive term that means to reach outside your organization to check the pulse of your marketplace.

I suggest three activities as part of your boundary-spanning strategy. First, keep at least a portion of the planning team intact. Not only is the team responsible for evaluating the plan's effectiveness; it is also ideally positioned to coordinate the boundary-spanning activities.

Second, the team should develop and initiate a research cycle such as the one outlined in Chapter 4. Nothing will keep you better informed about changes in your marketplace than a research cycle that systematically monitors constituencies and circumstances.

Third, the team should undertake a portion of the situational analysis each year. As with the research cycle, you might opt to devise a strategy that allows you to review your competition one year, factor demographic changes the second, and evaluate economic and employment trends the third.

Looking forward

Remember, your goal is not simply a marketing plan but a process that continually monitors the environment. It is this ongoing process that constantly measures strengths and weaknesses and assesses opportunities and threats. It is the process that spans the boundary from your institution to its environment. It is the process that synthesizes and sets priorities. It is the process that clarifies options.

At its best, the written marketing plan is an institution's organized, point-in-time response to the situational analysis. A solid planning process, however, recognizes—even anticipates—that the marketplace is fluid and dynamic. Things change, and an ongoing process will help keep the plan on track and on target.

As George Keller reminds us, "college presidents [and colleges] who do not look ahead become prisoners of external forces and surprises, most of them unpleasant." An ongoing marketing planning process will help make sure that all surprises are good ones.

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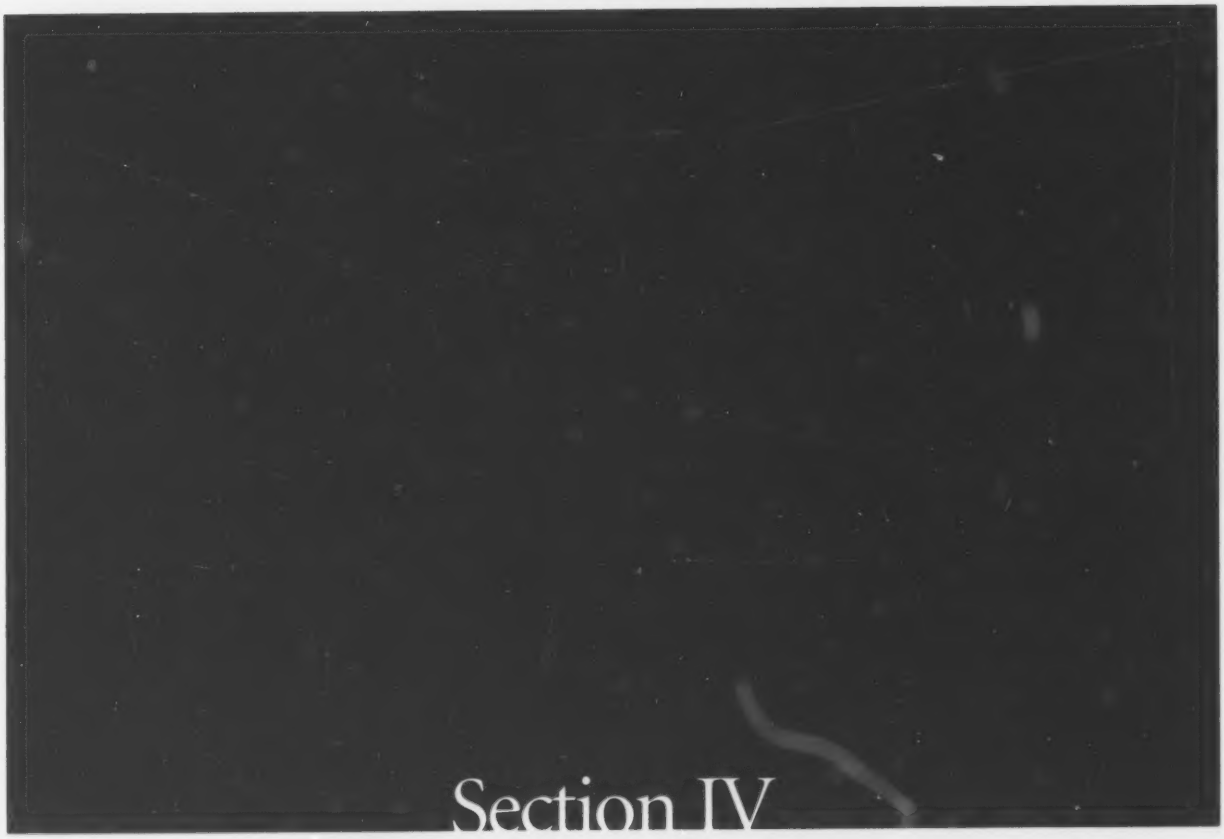

Section IV

Resources

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Appendix

A

Sources of Secondary Research

In an era of tight budgets, it is heartening to know there are some outstanding sources of inexpensive research data. These sources include, but are certainly not limited to, the following:

Your college or university library

Get to know the reference librarian and the tools he or she is able to offer. If you have access to batch searches, for instance, you will be able to ask the computer to provide a list of periodicals and books that address whatever topic you might be interested in. Also, check ERIC—a microfiche collection of documents relating to all facets of education.

Periodicals

In addition to specific publications for your areas of professional interest, you should be a regular reader of the following periodicals:

- *CASE Currents*
- *Admissions Strategist*

- *American Demographics*
- *Business Week*
- *Change*
- *Chronicle of Higher Education*
- *Chronicle of Philanthropy*
- *College and University*
- *Journal of College Admission*
- *Trusteeship*
- Major regional newspaper
- *Newsweek, Time,* or *U.S. News & World Report*
- Local newspaper

Your competition

The colleges with which you compete are a rich source of data. As soon as possible, have someone in your office get on their mailing lists. Keep track of their student-recruiting and fund-raising publications and correspondence. Pay particular attention to their positioning statements and what they are saying about themselves.

College guides

College guides are a valuable source of information. It is important to know not only how your college is depicted but what the guides are saying about your competition. While you're perusing the guide, read the detailed tables at the back of the book. They are valuable sources of comparative data and, when compared each year, trend data as well.

Trade and association newsletters

Many companies and associations produce newsletters that contain valuable information. CASE, NACAC, NCFR, AACRAO, and a multitude of other associations publish newsletters. A list of companies and associations is included in this Appendix.

The Web

One extremely useful resource is the World Wide Web. This Appendix contains more than 100 useful Web sites divided into seven key categories.

ACT/SAT data services

These services provide a wealth of comparative data.

The U.S. Government Printing Office

The United States government generates more data than any other body in the world, and most of these data are available at nominal cost through the U.S. Government Printing Office. When looking through its catalog of publications, don't forget the

Digest of Educational Statistics and the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States.*

U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census

The Census of Population is only one of the studies it publishes. In addition, it produces the censuses on housing, agriculture, business, manufacturers, mineral industries, transportation, and governments. Much of this information is available on floppy disk or CD, and importing it into your documents has never been easier.

Your own college database

Earlier we talked about using the application as a source of data. Don't forget to examine and possibly modify the forms and applications used by housing, the career center, financial aid, and other departments on your campus. Look, too, at your alumni data.

Consortium data

Consortia and associations are great sources of data. Whether you are a member of the Big Ten, Associated Colleges of the Midwest, or the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities, take advantage of the savings you can achieve through group association-wide projects.

Education organizations

At last count there were about 1,100 different educational organizations. Most of these organizations generate data. Check *Gale's Encyclopedia of Associations* for relevant educational organizations, and ask to be placed on their mailing lists.

Specialized publishers

There are several publishers that specialize in higher education. Jossey-Bass (especially its New Directions series), Barron's, Peterson's, College Board, Octameron Press, and others offer a variety of relevant books, periodicals, and annuals.

Media kits

To attract advertisers, magazines, newspapers, radio and television stations, and other media offer kits that contain demographic data about their audiences. These kits are a valuable source of information. If one of your constituent publics is served by a special magazine such as *Campus Life* or *Hispanic*, be sure to obtain those kits, also. And don't forget some of the professional publications like *Change* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education.* Their kits are extraordinarily helpful.

Local and regional Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce are valuable sources of demographic data and information relating to employment trends.

State economic development commissions

Like the chambers, state economic development commissions are also important sources of demographic, economic, and employment data.

Clipping file

A final source of data is your own clipping file. At Stamats, we have a file key of about 45 different topics. When someone in the company reads an article or attends a seminar that touches on one of those topics, the article or handout goes into the clipping file. Because much of this material is used in research, we make sure that each entry into the file includes a citation that lists the date and source of the information.

Appendix

B

Organizations and Associations

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
One Dupont Circle, Suite 330
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 293-9161
fax: (202) 872-8857

American College Personnel Association (ACPA)
One Dupont Circle, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 835-2272
fax: (202) 296-3286

American College Testing (ACT)
PO Box 4005
Iowa City, IA 52243
(319) 337-1000

American Council on Education (ACE)
One Dupont Circle, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 939-9300
fax: (202) 833-4760

American Marketing Association (AMA)
250 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 648-0536
fax: (312) 993-7542

American Telemarketing Association
4605 Lankershim Blvd., Suite 824
North Hollywood, CA 91602
(818) 766-5324
fax: (818) 766-8168

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB)
One Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 296-8400
fax: (202) 223-7053

Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities
329 Eighth St., NE
Washington, DC 20002-6158
(202) 546-8713
fax: (202) 546-8913

The College Board
45 Columbus Avenue
New York, NY 10023-6992
(212) 713-8000
fax: (212) 713-8282

Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
11 Dupont Circle, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 328-5900
fax: (202) 387-4973

Council for Independent Colleges
One Dupont Circle, Suite 320
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 466-7230

Direct Marketing Educational Foundation
1120 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
(212) 768-7277
fax: (212) 790-1561

ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education
One Dupont Circle, Suite 630
Washington, DC 20036-1183
(202) 296-2597
fax: (202) 452-1844

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
1631 Prince St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-2222
fax: (703) 836-8015

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
1920 L St., NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-0453
fax: (202) 785-1487

National Association of Student Financial Management Systems (NCHEMS)
PO Box 9752
Boulder, CO 80301
(303) 497-0392
fax: (303) 497-0338

National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
2501 M St., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 861-2500
fax: (202) 861-2583

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)
1025 Connecticut Ave., Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 785-8866
fax: (202) 835-0003

National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE)
1101 King St., Suite 700
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-0410
fax: (703) 684-0540

University Microfilms International
300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
(313) 761-4700

U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233
(301) 457-3761

U.S. Government Printing Office
710 North Capitol St., NW
Washington, DC 20401
(202) 512-0132

Appendix

C

Valuable Web Sites

The following Web sites are divided into seven general categories:

- U.S. agencies
- Education associations and organizations (general)
- Admissions, student recruiting, financial aid, and student services
- Fund raising, alumni relations, and foundations
- Media and public relations
- Marketing, advertising, and direct mail
- Data and research resources

Some Web sites have been listed in multiple areas.

U.S. Agencies

Smithsonian Institution
http://www.si.gov

U.S. Bureau of the Census
http://www.census.gov

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
http://www.bls.gov

U.S. Department of Education
http://www.ed.gov

U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education
http://www.ed.gov/offices/ope/index.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
http://www.os.dhhs.gov

U.S. House of Representatives
http://www.house.gov

U.S. Postal Service
http://www.usps.gov/

U.S. Senate
gopher.senate.gov

The White House
http://www.whitehouse.gov

Education Associations and Organizations (General)

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE)
http://www.ido.gmu.edu/AAHE/

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
http://www.aacc.nche.edu

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
http://www.igc.apc.org/aaup/

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
http://www.aauw.org

American Council on Education (ACE)
http://www.acenet.edu

American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
http://www.aft.org

Association of Governing Boards (AGB)
http://www.agb.org

Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)
http://www.ahead.org

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU)
http://www.ajcunet.edu/

Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)
http://www.gospelcom.net/cccu/

Council of Independent Colleges and Universities (CIC)
http://www.cic.edu

European Council of International Schools
http://www.ecis.org

Historically Black Colleges and Universities
http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/hbcu

Internet College Exchange (ICX)
http://www.usmall.com/college/index.html

Multicultural Alliance
http://branson.org/mca

National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)
http://www.nacubo.org

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)
http://www.nasbe.org

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
http://www.naspa.org

National Community Education Association
http://www.idsonline.com/ncea

National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations
http://trio.ume.maine.edu/~nceoa/nceoa.html

National Education Association (NEA)
http://www.nea.org

National Information Center for Children and Youth With Disabilities
http://www.nichcy.org

National Institute for Educational Planning
http://www.niep.com

National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students
http://www.ed.gov/offices

Telis (TeleLearning InfoSource)
http://www.telis.org

Universities (All)
http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/cdemello/univ-full.html

University Continuing Education Association (UCEA)
http://www.nucea.edu/main/html

United States Student Association
http://www.essential.org/ussa

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
http://www.wiche.edu/

World-Wide Graduate School Directory
http://www.gradschools.com

Admissions, Student Recruiting, Financial Aid, and Student Services

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
http://www.aacrao.com

Association of Black Admission and Financial Aid Officers of the Ivy League and Sister Schools
http://web.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/org

Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development
http://edap.bgsu.edu/AMCD

Athletic Scholarship Information Search Techniques (ASIST)
http://www.athletes.com/assist.html

College Board Online
http://www.collegeboard.org/

College Express
http://www.collegexpress.com/

College NET
http://www.collegenet.com/

College Scholarship Service
http://www.collegeboard.org/css/html/financialaidindx001.html

Educational Testing Service
http://www.ets.org/

Electronic Financial Aid Library
http://nt.scbbs.com/finaid/

Entrance Exams
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/user/mkant/

Financial Aid Information
http://www.finaid.org/

Loan Payment Estimator
http://www.student-loans.com/Repay.html

Minority Education Grants
http://www.grad.uiuc.edu/minority/Education_Grants.html

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)
http://www.nacac.com

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
http://www.fuaud.org/nasfaa

National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
http://www.naspa.org/

National College Fairs
http://www.nacac.com/faird&l.html

Nellie Mae Loan Link
http://www.nelliemae.org/

Performing & Visual Arts College Fairs
http://www.nacac.com

Peterson's Education
http://www.petersons.com

Preparing Your Child for College Science
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare/

Princeton Review
http://www.review.com/college/

Scholarship Scams
http://www.bcp/conline/edcamps/scholarship/

Student Services
http://www.studentservices.com

University Financial Aid Offices
http://www.finaid.org/finaid/fao-web.html

Fund Raising, Alumni Relations, and Foundations

Alumni Network
http://alumnet.com

American Society of Association Executives
http://www.asanet.org

Aspen Institute
http://www.aspeninst.org

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
http://www.web.net/imagine

Chronicle of Philanthropy
http://www.philanthropy.com

Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
http://www.case.org

Council on Foundations
http://www.cof.org

Foundation Center
http://fdncenter.org/

Foundation for Independent Higher Education
http://www.fihe.org/

GrantsWeb
http://www.web.fie.com

National Society of Fund-raising Executives (NSFRE)
http://www.nsfre.org

NonProfit Times
http://www.nptimes.com

Philanthropy Journal OnLine
http://www.philanthropy-journal-org/

Philanthropy News Digest
http://fdncente.org/phil/philmain.html

Media Relations, and Public Relations

ABC Television
http:/www.abc.com

American Journalism Review
http:/www.newslink.org/

Black Collegian
http://www.black-collegian.com/

Black Issues in Higher Education
http://www.blackissues.com

Business Wire
www.businesswire.com

CBS Television
http://www.cbs.com/

CNN
http://www.cnn.com

C-SPAN
http://www.c-span.org

Chronicle of Higher Education
http://www.thisweek.chronicle.com/

Columbia Journalism Review
http://www.cjr.org

Education News
http://biz.yahoo.com/news/education.html

Education Week
http:/www.edweek.org/ew/current/thisweek

ESPN
http:/www.espnet.com

Gebbie Press
http://www.gebbieinc.com

Los Angeles Times
http://www.latimes.com

MTV
http:/www.mtv.com

NBC Television
http:/www.nbc.com

National Public Radio
http://www.npr.org

New York Times
http://www.nytimes.com/

PBS Television
http:/www.pbs.org/

PR Newswire
http://www.prnewswire.com

Public Relations Society of America
http://www.prsa.org

Reuters
http://www.reuters.com

Rolling Stone
http://www.rollingstone.com

USA Today
http://usatoday.com

U.S. News Online
http://www.usnews.com

Wall Street Journal Interactive
http://www.wsj.com

Marketing, Advertising, and Direct Mail

Advertising Age
http://www.adage.com

American List Counsel
http://www.amlist.com

American Marketing Association
http:/www.ama.org

Beyond the Wall—Advertising
http://www.beyondthewall.com

Database America
http://www.databaseamerica.com

Dependable Lists
http://www.dependablelists.com

Direct Mail Underground
http://www.rdri.com

Direct Marketing News
http://www.dmnews.com

Direct Marketing University
http://www.communicomp.com

Direct Marketing World
http://www.dmworld.com

Direct Media
http://www.directmedia.com

Fishnet Electronic Magazine for Teens
http://www.jayi.com

Guerrilla Marketing
http://www.gmarketing.com

Horah Group—Direct Mail Resource
http://www.horah.com

Lycos—Personal Guide to the Web
http://point.lycos.com/

Marketplace 1 to 1 (Peppers and Rodgers)
http://www.m1to1.com

MaxiMarketing
http://www.maximarketing.com

National Research Center for College and University Admissions (mailing lists)
http://www.nrccua.com

Softmail Direct
http://www.softmail.com

Target On Line
http://www.targetonline.com

Data and Research Resources

Academe Today (*Chronicle of Higher Education*)
http://www.chronicle.com

Amazon Bookstore
http://www.amazon.com

American Council on Education (ACE)
http://www.acenet.edu

American Demographics
http://www.demographics.com

AskERIC
http://ericir.syr.edu/

Business Directory
http://businessdirectory.dowjones.com

Education Commission of the States
http://www.ecs.org

Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse (ERIC)
http://aspensys3.aspensys.com/eric/barak.html#1

Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education (ERIC/SP)
http://www.ericsp.org

Electric Library
http://www.elibrary.com

Federal Web Locator
http://www.law.vill.edu/Fed-Agency/Fedwebloc.html

Gale Encyclopedia of Associations
http://www.gale.com

Internet Resources for Institutional Research
http://apollo.gmu.edu/~jmilam/air95.html

Mead Data
http://www.meaddata.com

National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA)
http://softlib.rice.edu.ncura

Tattered Cover Bookstore
http://www.tatteredcover.com

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
http://www.wiche.edu/

Yahoo: Education: Organizations: Student Organizations
http://www.yahoo/Education/Organizations/Student_Organizations

Yahoo: News/Newspapers: Universities
http:/ww.yahoo.com/News/Newspapers/University

Appendix

D

A Primer for Working With Teams

Strategies for building the team

To help assemble and build the most effective marketing team possible, we suggest that the champion adapt the following nine strategies:

- Set the ground rules
- Meet off site
- Protect the team
- Draw the team together
- Settle on a basic decision-making procedure
- Monitor the performance of cross-functional teams
- Recognize dysfunctional traits and tendencies
- Deal effectively with resistance
- Reward the team

Set the ground rules

It is very important to set the ground rules as early as possible in the planning

process. Ideally this has been done while that individual was being recruited for the team. However, it is always helpful to review with potential team members the answers to such questions as the following very early in the planning process:

- Why was I selected for this team?
- What is expected of me—what will I have to do?
- What are the limits of my time and commitment—how long will this take?
- Who is in charge of the team?
- Why was that person chosen?
- What is our purpose—what will be the practical outcomes of this team?
- What guarantees do I have that my contribution to this team will not be held against me in the future?
- How will my contribution to the team be recognized by the institution and my peers?

Glenn notes that it is not uncommon at the start to find that some team members may have some degree of hostility and suspicion. Often, as the ground rules are established and differences and expectations are talked out, this hostility and suspicion mellow to a genuine interest in the planning process.

Meet off-site

One of the most important things that you can do to help build a strong marketing team is to hold your first meeting or first meetings off-site. This is especially important if the team members have little prior experience working together.

Meeting off site is important for several reasons. First, it helps reduce territoriality. Second, off-site meetings isolate the team from day-to-day interruptions. Third, they are an ideal place to begin team-building experiences. And finally, off-site meetings can include not only time for work but time for play and relaxation.

Protect the team

As part of the team-building process, every effort must be made to protect the team from undue criticism. Often, team members become lightning rods for their constituencies and are unfairly criticized for actions of the team as a whole or for the institution's decision to pursue a more comprehensive marketing strategy. In an age of finite resources, marketing decisions often mean the reallocation of funds and institutional priorities. This can become a politically charged process, and team members will have a heightened sense of vulnerability.

These are some of the ways to help protect the team:

- Make clear to the community the challenges facing the institution and how marketing will help the college or university more successfully meet those challenges.
- Announce to the campus community why specific people were chosen to participate on the team.
- Invite campus-wide participation in the gathering of information.

- Keep the decision-making process as open and above-board as possible.
- Keep accurate notes and meeting minutes, and make them available to non-members of the committee.
- Encourage the team as often and as sincerely as possible.

Draw the team together

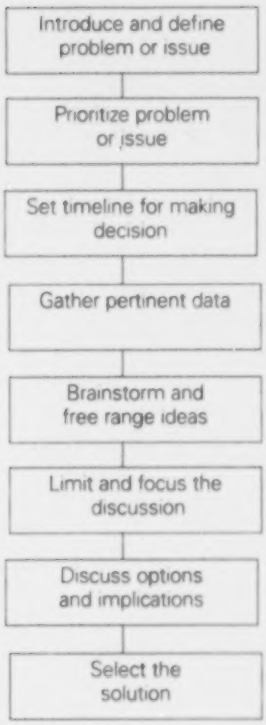
To help coalesce the team as quickly as possible, I suggest the use of team-building exercises. These exercises will help members learn more about each other, increase their level of trust, and help draw them together.

Generally, team-building exercises should be initiated during the first few meetings and then less frequently throughout the planning process. In some cases it is good to have a team-building facilitator. However, the champion is often able to guide the exercises as long as he or she also participates.

Here are some excellent sources for games and team-building exercises:

- Brandes, Donna, and Phillips, Howard: *Gamesters Handbook: Hundreds of Games for Teachers and Group Leaders.* Philadelphia: Trans Atlantic Publications, 1995.
- Francis, Dave, and Young, Don: *Improving Work Groups: A Practical Manual for Team-Building.* San Diego: University Associates, 1995.
- Pfeiffer, J. William: *The Encyclopedia of Team Building Activities.* San Diego: University Associates, 1990.
- Woodcock, Mike: *50 Activities for Teambuilding.* Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1989.

Figure A-1.
Decision-Making


Introduce and define problem or issue
Prioritize problem or issue
Set timeline for making decision
Gather pertinent data
Brainstorm and free range ideas
Limit and focus the discussion
Discuss options and implications
Select the solution

Settle on a basic decision-making procedure

Sooner or later the marketing team will have to make decisions—often very tough decisions—and how these are made is extraordinarily important. This is particularly true in higher education, where the process through which decisions are made is often at least as important as the resulting decision.

Moody, writing in *Decision-Making,* noted that capable decisions do not necessarily automatically arise from capable individuals. Although decision-making can at times be disconcerting, there are some handy tools that will help the process go more smoothly.

The high cost of perfect decisions

Before we can proceed too much further, we need to understand the difference between perfect decisions and pretty good decisions. Too often, colleges and universities try to make perfect decisions and spend far too much time and money contemplating their options. More likely than not, they never actually decide.

Our goal is not to help you make perfect decisions—they are too costly—but to help you make many satisfactory decisions in a timely fashion, decisions that keep things moving ahead and on schedule.

The schematic presented in Figure A-1 outlines a straightforward decision-making process that is worth exploring.

The first step is to introduce and define the problem or issue to be discussed. In some cases, this will involve establishing a context so all team members may understand the subtleties and implications being examined.

Next, juxtapose this problem or issue against others being contemplated. The goal, of course, is to set priorities. If the problem or issue pales when compared to the items already on the docket, it may be safely postponed. On the other hand, if its importance is quickly appreciated, it moves up the list.

The third step is to establish a timeline. This not only forces a decision but helps set a boundary for gathering data. Establishing a credible timeline—and sticking to it—is an important and often overlooked part of the decision-making process.

The fourth step is to gather pertinent data. Often, team members simply do not have enough information to make a learned and reasoned decision.

The next step is to brainstorm ideas and options. Brainstorming, sometimes called free-ranging, is an underutilized and underappreciated decision tool. For brainstorming to work well, the group must agree to the following guidelines:

- Work as fast as possible to reduce hindrances and generate more ideas.
- Set no restrictions; wild ideas are welcome.
- Aim for quantity, not quality.
- Encourage combinations and improvements.
- Don't judge until all ideas are introduced (this is the hardest rule to follow).

The keys to a successful brainstorming session are volume and variety. As in all dynamic situations, the better ideas have a tendency to percolate to the top.

At the conclusion of the brainstorming session, or perhaps in a later session, begin to limit and focus the discussion. At this time you are beginning to apply constraints of time, talent, and money. However, if the session was successful, you will still have a wonderfully diverse range of options from which to choose.

Next, discuss options and implications. One college president calls this "short-listing." Focus on the most salient ideas. In some cases, within the timeline you have established, you may require additional research before you can make a decision. The final step is to choose a course of action—to decide.

The schematic outlined above focuses on dealing with one issue or problem at a time. Of course, marketing teams will often confront multiple issues and problems, all clamoring for their share of attention.

The role of the champion

A good champion guides the team through the decision-making process. He or she facilitates members' contributions by performing several important functions:

- Initiating: The champion cites a problem and suggests a procedure for solving it
- Opinion-giving: The champion states his or her views without imposing them on the team

- Clarification: The champion restates another's point to reduce misunderstanding
- Summarizing: The champion incorporates the views of the team into a solution for consideration
- Consensus testing: The champion frequently checks with members of the team to measure progress
- Group maintenance: The champion encourages the team, promotes harmony and compromise, facilitates communication, and sets group performance standards

Dampening enthusiasm

One of the quickest ways to dampen any enthusiasm that brainstorming may generate is to use "killer phrases" like these in Table A-1.

Table A-1.
Killer Phrases

A good idea, but . . .
Be practical . . .
We tried that . . .
Against school policy . . .
It needs more study . . .
All right in theory . . .
Don't start anything yet . . .
It's not budgeted . . .
It's not our job . . .
That's not our problem . . .
Let's turn it over to a committee . . .
The faculty won't go for it . . .
We've been doing it this way for a long time . . .
We've never done it this way before . . .
What other schools are trying this . . .
We're not a business, we're a college . . .
If this idea is so good, why isn't someone else doing it?

Monitor the performance of cross-functional teams

The need for the champion to monitor and appraise the performance of the team and its members is an extremely important undertaking that will help assure the success of the overall endeavor. Parker, writing in *Cross-Functional Teams*, notes that team players tend to fall into one of four general categories with good qualities:

Contributor

1. Shares relevant information with colleagues
2. Helps the team use its time and resources effectively
3. Pushes the team to achieve outstanding results
4. Successfully completes all work that affects the team's success
5. Accepts responsibility for team-oriented actions
6. Serves as a mentor for new team members
7. Has a clear set of priorities

Collaborator

1. Helps the team set and clarify long-term goals
2. Regularly reminds the team to review its goals and plans
3. Helps teammates who need it
4. Works hard to achieve team goals whether or not he or she agrees with them
5. Is open to new ideas or information that may alter team goals
6. Works outside defined roles to help achieve team goals
7. Shares credit with teammates

Communicator

1. Helps resolve technical or interpersonal problems
2. Listens objectively while withholding judgment
3. Recognizes and praises colleagues for their efforts
4. Shows enthusiasm and a sense of urgency for the team's work

5. Tries to achieve consensus among teammates
6. Encourages others to participate in discussions and decisions
7. Provides other members with specific, helpful feedback on their performance

Challenger

1. Frankly shares opinions about the team's work
2. Disputes conventional wisdom, even if it means disagreeing with the team leader or the majority
3. Questions the team's goals
4. Pushes the team to set high ethical standards
5. Asks why, how, and other relevant questions at team meetings
6. Challenges the team to take calculated risks
7. Reports team progress and problems honestly
8. Backs off when views are rejected; supports a legitimate team consensus

Recognize dysfunctional traits and tendencies

As you begin to work as a team, the champion and all members keep in mind some of the symptoms of dysfunctional teams. Berelson and Steiner outlined a number of typical symptoms, including these:

- Cautious or guarded communication: Fear of some form of punishment, ridicule, or negative reaction may cause people to say nothing or be guarded in what they do say.
- Formal or structural communication: This is happening when people substitute letters and e-mail for personal communication, send copies of their letters to people outside the team, or use legal terminology in correspondence.
- Lack of disagreement: When there is little or no disagreement among a group, it is very possible that the members, for whatever reason, are unwilling to share true feelings or ideas. When there are healthy differences, people will make such statements as "I have a thought on that," or "Here's another way to think about this."
- Failure to share information: Team members often have valuable experience relating to a point of discussion. When they hold back that information or perspective, the destructiveness of poor teamwork is in motion.
- Reliance on criticism: Criticism, particularly when delivered in the presence of others, is a form of punishment that will inhibit people from sharing ideas and making suggestions.
- Lack of individual feedback: When teams are working well, members receive frequent, constructive, and specific feedback, given in a positive way. In a poor team, there is little or no feedback—and what there is is usually negative.
- Poor meetings: It is likely that a counterproductive team is at work if, when a team meets, the following symptoms are present:
  - nonexistent or unclear agenda

- general boredom or lack of enthusiastic participation
- long, poorly structured meetings
- failure to reach decisions
- one or two people dominating all discussions
- people being put down and stymied

- Unclear goals: All team members should be able to articulate team goals.
- Low commitment: When goals are dictated rather than reached through consensus, team members are likely to respond, "These are not my goals."
- Unrealistic goals: Poor teams draft goals that are unreachable.
- Conflict within the team: If there is a destructive conflict among team members, it will lead to a suspicious and combative environment.
- Failure to use team members' talents: Ineffective teams are often unaware of the diversity and different levels of members' skills.
- Competition: When members are openly competing with one another, they often withhold information that would benefit the entire team and the planning process.
- Conformity: Poor teams stress conformity and a follow-the-norm approach.
- Tension: When people are uncomfortable together and the atmosphere is tense, a team is unable to function in an open and sharing manner.
- Misunderstanding of jobs or roles: Members of poorly functioning teams often express confusion: "That's not my job," "He was going to do that," or "I have no idea what we are doing."
- Low confidence in others: In an effective team, individuals not only know the roles of other team members but also have confidence that other members will carry out their parts of the job.
- One-person decisions: Poor teamwork can be a result of the way members participate in decisions. In poor teams, decisions are boss-directed, with only marginal team-member input actually counting in the final decision.

Deal effectively with resistance

Sooner or later, members of any team resist an idea or direction. This is a time of great vulnerability for both the individual and the team. The individual may feel threatened and even ostracized, while team members watch to see how the individual is treated.

Dealing constructively with this is a very important part of team dynamics. Laurence Smith, Vice President of Marketing and Student Affairs at Eastern Michigan University, offers ten ways to work with resistance:

- Maintain two-way communication at all times.
- Never punish resistance.
- Involve potential resisters in fact-gathering.
- Help those affected to make their feelings known.
- Do not predetermine what is "illegitimate."

- Try to change the norms of the group.
- Engage communication directly aimed at confronting, sharing, and probing resisters' feelings.
- Look for opportunities to negotiate "win-win" solutions.
- Build a sense of confidence and competence about new situations.
- Never mandate. Remember, people support what they build.

Reward the team

A strong, dynamic champion will only get you so far. The institution must also be willing to reward or compensate the team in positive ways. Here are some options for rewarding the team and its members:

- Provide release time from other activities and responsibilities.
- Hold planning retreats that include time and allowances for recreation.
- Allow members to present progress on key marketing initiatives to the campus community.
- Help members, through the planning process, to increase their level of expertise in an area that they value.

Appendix

E

Sample SWOT Analysis Survey of Faculty

As you know, the college is involved in creating a comprehensive, institutionwide marketing plan. An essential part of this process is gaining input from faculty. To facilitate that input, would you please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Please feel free to attach other sheets as necessary.

This survey is both anonymous and confidential. It is designed to be returned directly to Stamats, and it will not be seen by any XYZ faculty, staff, administrator, or trustee. Data will be presented in the aggregate, and anecdotally, as part of our final report and presentation to the college.

To be included in this study, this survey must be completed and returned in the envelope provided no later than _____.

Thank you for your help.

Name
Title et al.

1. What three or four national/external trends do you feel will have the most impact on XYZ's future?

2. Overall, how would you assess XYZ's vulnerability in today's recruiting marketplace?

Not vulnerable = _ _ _ _ _ = Very vulnerable

3. From your perspective, what should be the college's top three academic priorities?

4. How do you define academic quality?

5. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of XYZ's general education requirements?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

6. What is your best idea for improving the quality of the classroom experience?

7. What new/additional AV (audiovisual) resources would most help you improve the teaching/learning experience for your students?

8. What new/additional technology/technological resources would most help you improve the teaching/learning experience for your students?

9. What resources (within reason) do you need to do a better job teaching?

10. Overall, how would you rate the quality of XYZ's advising program?

11. What ideas do you have for improving advising?

12. What ideas (other than those outlined above) do you have for enhancing the intellectual growth and career preparation of XYZ's students?

13. What ideas do you have for improving XYZ's retention programs and strategies?

14. Aside from your own, what is the strongest academic program on campus?

15. Within present or reasonable resources, and based on your understanding of XYZ's mission and the ABC area, what major(s) should the college consider adding to its curriculum?

Undergraduate:

Graduate:

Post-baccalaureate/certificate curricula:

16. What ideas do you have for improving the manner in which XYZ evaluates its current academic programs and majors?

17. What ideas do you have for improving the manner in which XYZ evaluates potential (new) academic programs and majors?

18. In your opinion, what new building or renovation of an existing building would have the most impact on the College's ability to meet the educational needs of its students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

19. From your perspective, how can the college improve its ability to more effectively and consistently take advantage of the ideas of faculty like you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

20. If there was one thing you could change about XYZ, what would it be?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

A little bit about you:

21. Do you teach at XYZ: ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time

22. Do you primarily teach:
☐ Day classes (before 5 p.m.) ☐ Evening classes (after 5 p.m.)

23. Are you tenured? ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. How long have you taught at XYZ? (number of years) ____

Thank you for your help with this survey.

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✓ Particularly recommended

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About the Author

Robert Sevier is the vice president for research and marketing at Stamats Communications, Inc., an integrated marketing, publications, interactive media, and consulting company serving higher education. Each year, Sevier directs more than 100 research studies of such audiences as prospective students (both traditional and nontraditional), parents, community residents, current and former donors, business leaders, faculty and staff, trustees, and others.

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- Social, demographic, economic, and governance trends affecting higher education
- Integrated marketing communication
- Analyzing and improving institutional images
- Marketing, recruiting, and competitive positioning plan development
- Designing search and direct mail strategies
- Enrollment management
- Developing more effective recruiting funnels

Sevier directs the Stamats Working Smart seminars, and is a frequent contributor to *Applications, ACCESS, re:Quest*, and *Advantage* newsletters. He is also responsible for the Stamats' White Papers, a series of monographs for presidents and senior

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Prior to Stamats, Sevier worked as director of Media Relations for the Oregon Health Sciences University and served as director of marketing communications for Denison University. He taught journalism and public relations at the college level for 10 years.

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EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FACE A GROWING NUMBER of complex challenges that threaten their growth and prosperity. Shrinking departmental budgets, greater institutional demands, and intensified competition throughout the industry are testing the integrity and survival of universities, colleges, and independent elementary and secondary schools.

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Robert A. Sevier is vice president for research and marketing at Stamats Communications, Inc. He annually directs more than 100 research studies of audiences, including prospective students (traditional and nontraditional), parents, community residents, current and former donors, business leaders, faculty and staff, trustees, and others.

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